



shôjo

BASARA



Story and Art by **Yumi Tamura**

Vol.5



shôjo

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Yumi Tamura

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Sarasa (disguised as Tatara)

When Sarasa and her twin brother Tatara were born, a prophecy was made. "This is a child of destiny, one who will grow to lead the people and be the light in the sky of our nation's future." The people of Byakko Village assumed Tatara was the "Boy of Destiny," and Sarasa grew up mostly in his shadow. When the Red King's forces kill Tatara, Sarasa takes up her brother's name and fights in his guise, not realizing that she is the real Child of Destiny. Only visits to hot springs offer Sarasa the privacy to indulge her true identity. There, she has met a curious young man named Shuri, who has become her only outlet for being completely herself.



The Red King

In charge of Midwestern Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu, he is the youngest of the King of Japan's four sons. Prophesied to bring misfortune to his father, King Ukon branded him a slave. Only a privileged few call him by his name—Shuri. Hounded by threats from abroad and his family, he is a ruthless but effective ruler, crushing those who oppose him. The destruction of Byakko Village is just one in a long list of rebel groups he has suppressed. Ignorant of her secret identity and hiding his own, Shuri's interactions with Sarasa reveal hints of his unhealthy family history and his desire to unite Japan in peace. Seemingly intent on courting, he has given Sarasa a whistle to call a carrier parrot so they might write to each other during their travels. He has shaved his head to disguise himself as a monk while traveling in Kanto.



Ageha

Capable of staying the hand of a King and arranging for 1,000 head of cattle on short notice, this mysterious desert nomad seems to be extremely informed and influential. He also has a secret identity—Kicho, a famous performer among a traveling troupe of dancing ladies. Ageha lost his left eye when the Red King blinded it as payment for his rescue of 12-year-old Sarasa. Now, he is "Tatara's" slightly mercenary ally. Ageha uses his owl companion, Kagero, to carry messages to his contacts.



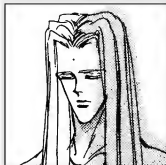
Kaku

Byakko Village's military advisor and trainer, Kaku is loyal to Sarasa's family and the cause of the "Boy of Destiny." Kaku, the prophet Nagi, and Sarasa's mother are the only ones who know Sarasa has taken her brother's place. Unwilling to fully trust Sarasa's daring plan to sneak into the Blue King's territory, Kaku is secretly tailing Sarasa.



Hisha

A fast and enduring runner, Hisha is from Ochiori Valley, and his people are allies of Byakko Village. His speed makes him the perfect choice to act as messenger between "Tatara" and others. He is accompanying Kaku in his mission to keep "Tatara" safe.



Nagi

Extremely wise, Nagi is the blind prophet who declared the prophecy at the birth of Tatara and Sarasa. Also a priest, a doctor and a teacher, Nagi has educated Sarasa despite others who questioned the wisdom of teaching so much to a girl.



The Blue King

Second eldest of King Ukon's sons, what little there's been revealed of him shows a decadent, cold-hearted ruler interested primarily in his own enjoyment. He rules the Kanto area; his capital is Seiran.



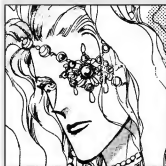
The Blue King's Messenger

A powerful and imposing figure, he curiously refuses to remove his armor even in the heat of the desert sun.



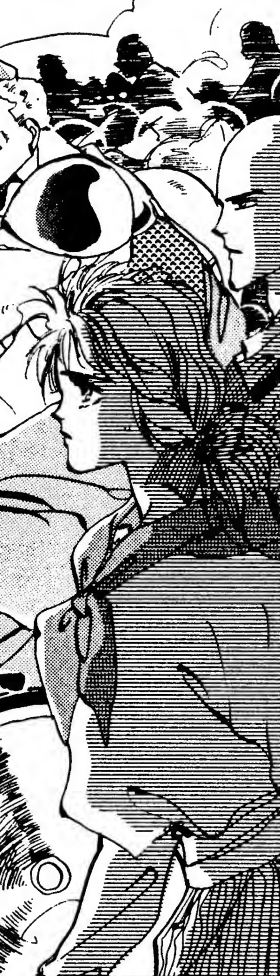
Captain of the Gunjo

His pale skin, sharp uniform and refined demeanor belie his ruthlessness, for anyone in charge of a group of men nicknamed the "Vampire Corps" can hardly be kind. Descended from the legendary Koga ninja, the Gunjo, or Turquoise Bodyguards, are the Blue King's personal bodyguards.



Madam Butterfly

Leader of a troupe of dancing ladies who travel throughout Japan, this kind, generous and courageous woman has a habit of taking in orphans. Under the alias "Kicho," Ageha is one of her star performers, drawing big crowds in return for the freedom of travel her troupe provides.



STORY THUS FAR

In the early 21st century, an apocalypse turned fertile lands into deserts and brought human civilization to its knees. Control of Japan passed into the hands of tyrannical kings. 300 years later, a new hope was born.

At the birth of a rebel chieftain's twins, the blind prophet Nagi predicted, "This is a child of destiny, one who will grow to lead the people and be the light in the sky of our nation's future." The people of Byakko Village placed their hopes in their Chieftain's son Tatara and raised him as the "Boy of Destiny."

With the tyrannical Ukon XV ruling Japan through his ruthless sons, a better tomorrow can only be achieved by means of strife and bloodshed. When the "Boy of Destiny" is killed by the Red King's forces, it is up to his twin sister to secretly take up his sword and fulfill the prophecy of their birth. Sarasa must lead her people in her brother's name or all will be lost.

Sarasa's journey to Kyushu has not only gained her allies but an impossible victory over the Red King. Miraculously, she has crippled the Red King's Navy and fearsome chariot corps. She has also survived a deadly trap that ended in the death of Shido, ruler of Kyushu and the Red King's cousin and closest companion. But in doing so, she lost Byakko, her village's sacred sword.

After her victory, a messenger arrives, bearing an invitation to visit the Blue King in Seiran and discuss a possible alliance. Uninterested in aiding a man who wants to kill his own brother, Sarasa initially refuses, but when the messenger explains that the Blue King now possesses the Byakko sword, she changes her mind.

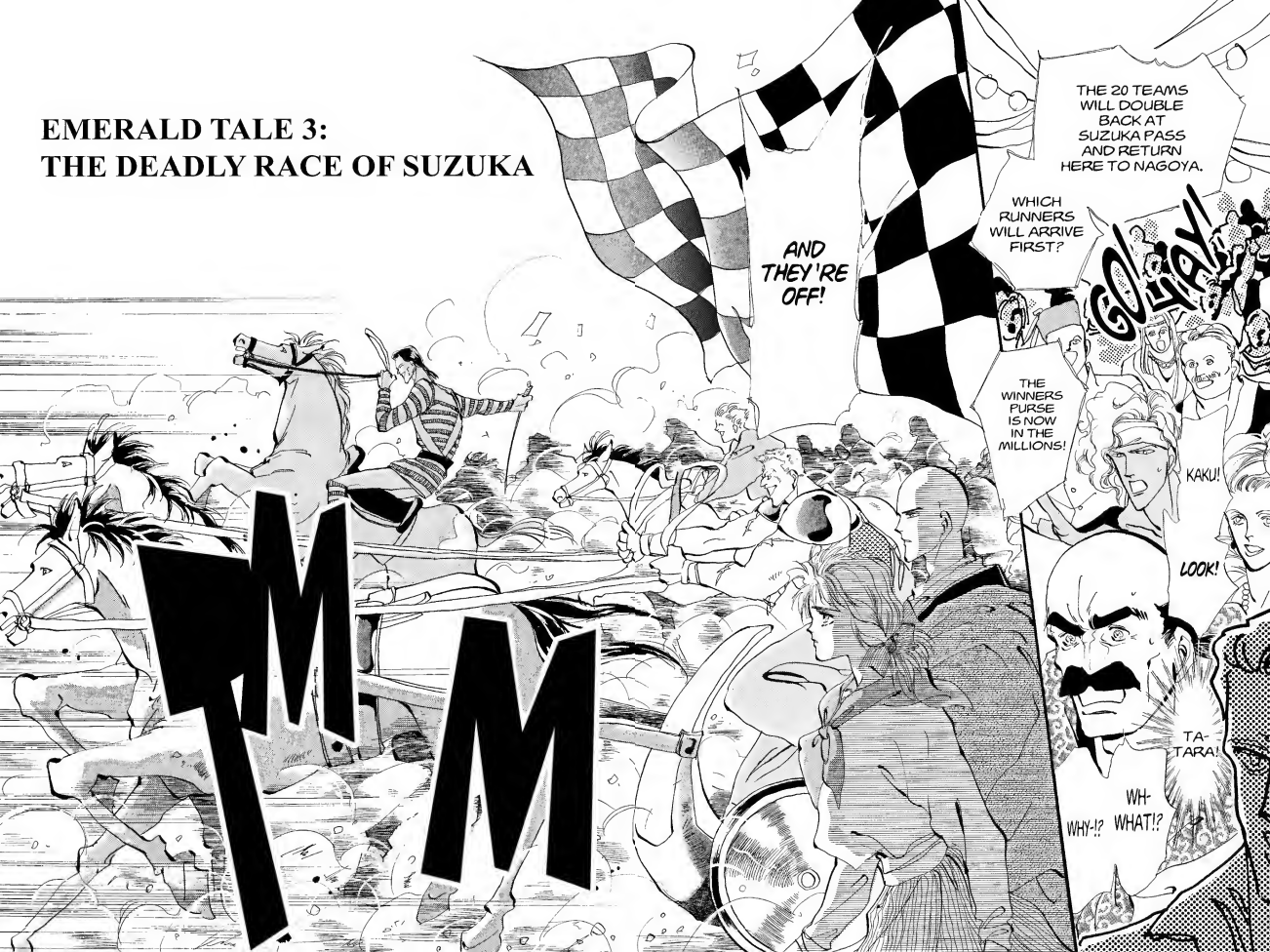
Traveling with Shuri—who's in the guise of a monk!—Sarasa has planned to journey to Seiran and secretly check things out before she meets the Blue King and retrieves the Byakko sword. Her plan is foiled when they are captured! Now, for the entertainment of wealthy spectators, they are being forced to participate in a mysterious race no one has ever won.

CONTENTS

Emerald Tale 3: The Deadly Race of Suzuka	5
Emerald Tale 4: The Serpent King	52
Emerald Tale 5: The Blue Dragon	92
Emerald Tale 6: Pounding Hearts	135
Shinbashi Goes Home	183



EMERALD TALE 3: THE DEADLY RACE OF SUZUKA



AND
THEY'RE
OFF!

THE 20 TEAMS
WILL DOUBLE
BACK AT
SUZUKA PASS
AND RETURN
HERE TO NAGOYA.

WHICH
RUNNERS
WILL ARRIVE
FIRST?

THE
WINNERS
PURSE
IS NOW
IN THE
MILLIONS!

GO!

KAKU!

LOOK!

TA-
TARA!

WH-
WHY-!? WHAT!?



CARRIAGES
OR ANY
OTHER
VEHICLE
MAY ALSO
BE USED.

YOU
ARE
FREE
TO
RIDE
ON
HORSE-
BACK.



WOO-
HOO!

OUTTA
MY
WAY!



...IN
BARE
FEET.



SLAVES
MAY NOT
RIDE
ON
HORSES
AND
MUST
RUN...

TINY TAM-TAM TIME ①

Hello!

Thanks for all your letters!

It makes me so happy to be getting more mail lately! ♡

My replies will be very slow in coming, so please be patient with me!

I'm sorry that I can't answer individual questions though... ☹

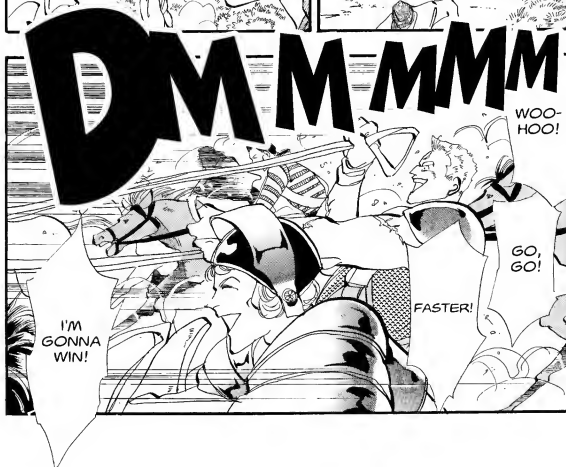
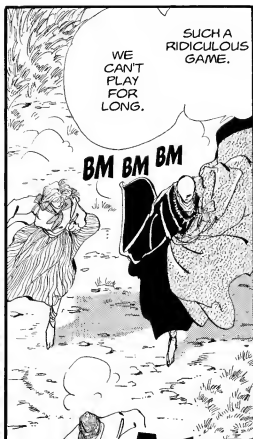
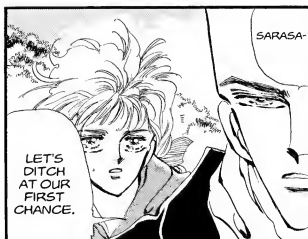
Several people have sent me tapes of their favorite music, or music they think fits the world of Basara.

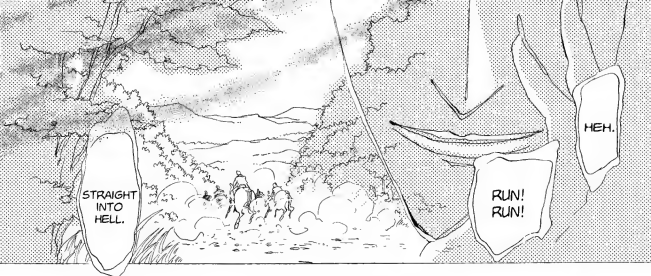
I listen to them while I work. Thank you so much!



SARASA'S JOURNEY





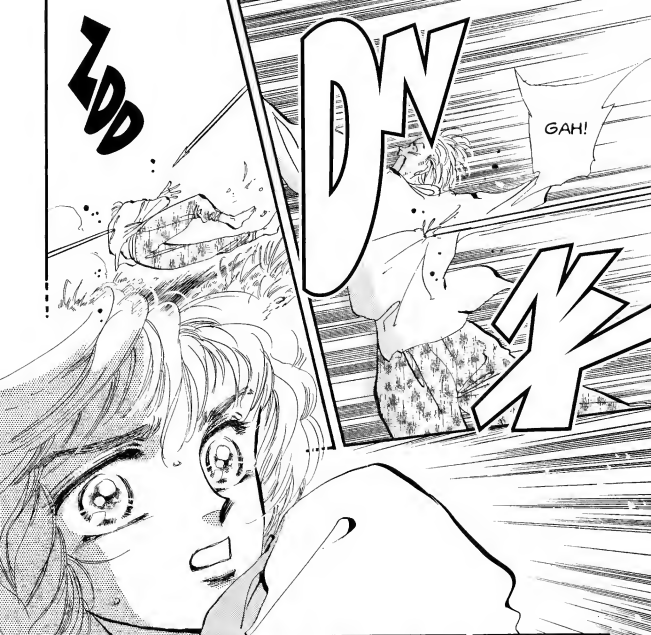


DM DM DM DM DM

DM DM DM

R
M
M





GAH!



WH-

WHAT'S
HAP-
PENING...?

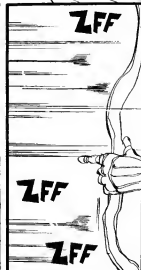


WHAT
IS
THIS
...?



GAAH!

AAA!



ZFF

ZFF

ZFF



IN
THAT
CASE
...

NONE
OF
YOU...

A
SLAUGH-
TER-

FOR
THE
BLUE
KING'S
ENTER-
TAINMENT!

I
TOLD
YOU!

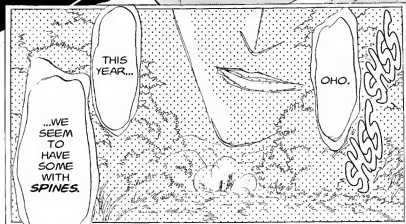
THIS
IS A
HUNT!
A HUNT
FOR
HUMANS!

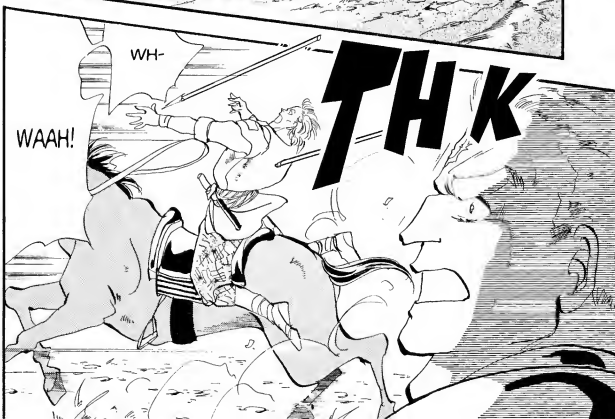
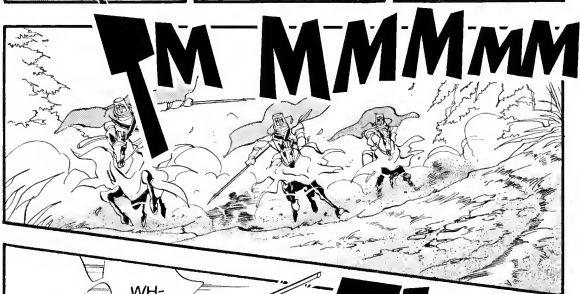
KA-

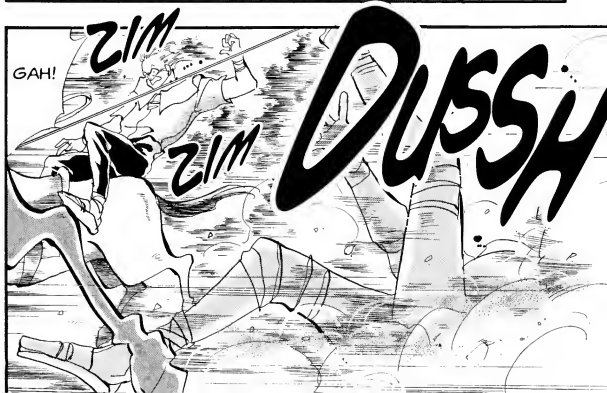
IF YOU
GET
HURT!

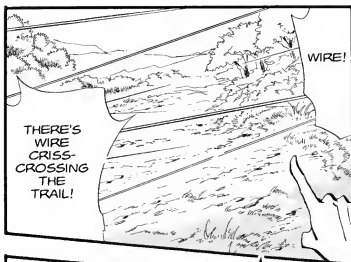
...CAN
COMPLAIN-

TWKK











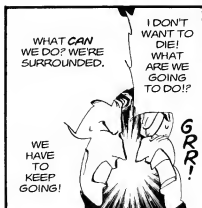




THEY
TRICKED
US!

DAMN
IT!

STOP
YELLING.



WHAT *CAN*
WE DO? WE'RE
SURROUNDED.

I DON'T
WANT TO
DIE! WHAT
ARE WE
GOING
TO DO!?

GR!

WE
HAVE
TO
KEEP
GOING!



I'D
HEARD
HE WAS
GOOD
FOR
NOTHING.



THE
BLUE
KING.

SO
THIS IS
WHAT
HE'S
LIKE!



I
HEAR
WATER...

WAIT...

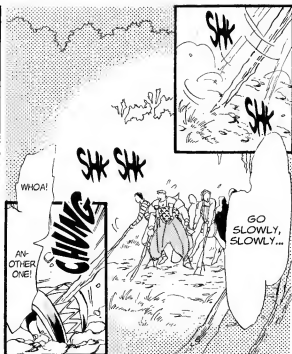
IT'S
A
RIVER!



PHEN...

IT'S
SO
HOT...

I
HOPE
IT
RAINS.



WHOA!

AN-
OTHER
ONE!

CHUNG

GO
SLOWLY,
SLOWLY...







GLBB GLBB
PLASH PLASH

!!

GWA

WAAH
ZOOOSH
ROOSH
G-GET BACK!
BACK TO SHORE!
THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE WATER!

ALLIGATORS!

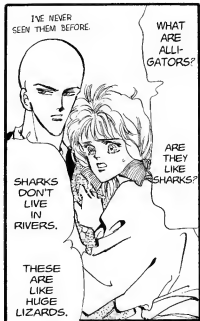


WE'RE THEIR FOOD.



WHY ARE THERE ALLIGATORS IN KISO RIVER?!

DON'T ASK ME! THEY MUST BE THE BLUE KING'S PETS! HE LOVES REPTILES!



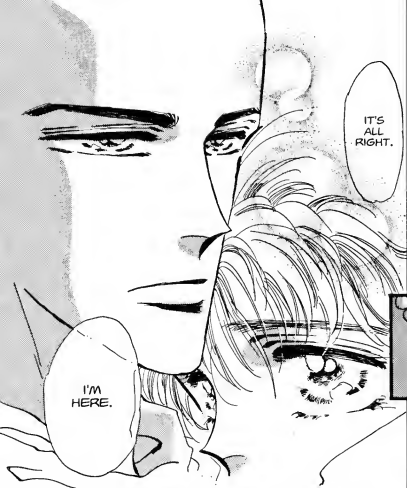
I'VE NEVER SEEN THEM BEFORE.

WHAT ARE ALLIGATORS?

SHARKS DON'T LIVE IN RIVERS.

THESE ARE LIKE HUGE LIZARDS.

ARE THEY LIKE SHARKS?

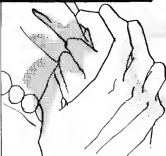


I'M
HERE.

IT'S
ALL
RIGHT.



SHURI
...



B-BUMP

NO
ONE...

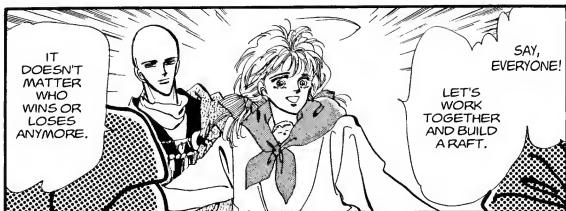


IT MUST FEEL NICE...
...TO BE PROTECTED.

...HAS
EVER SAID
ANYTHING
LIKE THAT
TO ME.



BUT...



WE ONLY
NEED
IT TO REACH
THE OTHER
SHORE.

WHO
KNOWS?

IS SHE
REALLY
GOING
TO FLOAT?

SHF SHHF

HUP HUP

I DON'T
SEE WHY
THE KNIGHTS
WOULD
STAND
BY AND
LET US
DO THIS.

TUG

IN
IT
GOES!

BLOOSH



YANK

WHAT?!

BUT
YOU
CAN
COME.

BUT WE
MADE
IT
TOGETHER!



THERE'S
NOT
ENOUGH
ROOM
FOR
SLAVES.

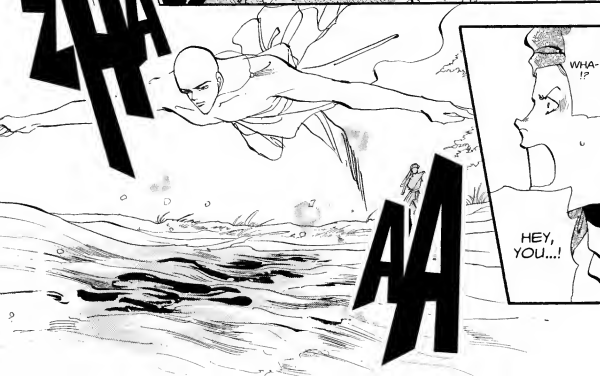
YOU'LL
HAVE
TO
SWIM.

WOO
WOO!

OKAY,
EVERY-
ONE
ON.

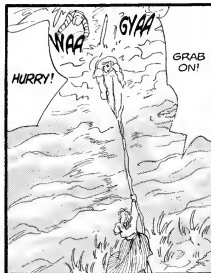
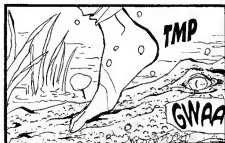
FISH

WAIT.









BISH

BASH BISH

SORRY.

THANKS...

...THE
NUMBER
WHO
STARTED.

WE'RE
ONLY
HALF...

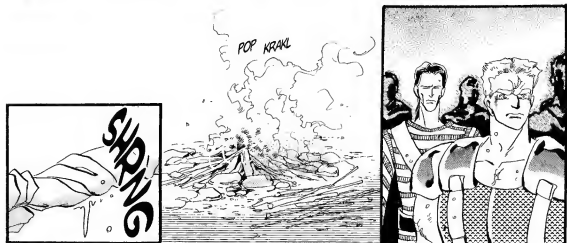
WHAT
!?

MAKE
YOURSELVES
A FIRE AND
REST.

THE RACE
WILL TAKE
A RECESS
UNTIL
DAYBREAK.

CALLING
ALL
RACERS.

SHK SHK







I'M
DESTINED
TO
SURVIVE.

NOT
ME.

I
WON'T
DIE.

THE
"CHILD
OF
DESTINY".

HE
WAS
DESTINED,
TOO.

MY
BROTHER...

TATARA...

OW!

POW!

IDIOTS
WHO SAY
THINGS
LIKE
THAT

ARE THE
ONES
WHO
DIE
FIRST!

IDIOT...

BUT
HE
DIED!

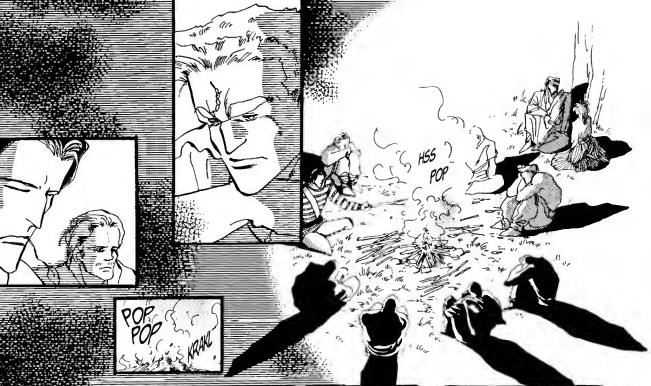
IDIOT!



...TO CALL ME STUPID.







YOU'RE PATHETIC

QUIT CRYING!

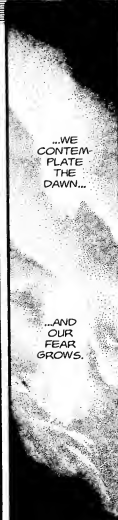
SNF.



IF YOU'RE WILLING TO HELP...



...THERE IS A WAY.

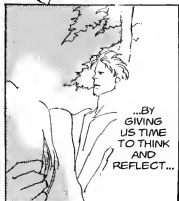


...WE CONTEMPLATE THE DAWN...

...AND OUR FEAR GROWS.



OUR ADVERSARY'S PLAN IS EFFECTIVE...



...BY GIVING US TIME TO THINK AND REFLECT...





WE
NEED
MORE
WOOD.

WH-

WHAT
IS
THIS?

DO WE
PUT IT
OVER
OUR
HEADS
AND
SCARE
THEM?

WHAT
DO WE
DO
WITH
IT?

IT'S
A
BALLOON.

A
BA-
LOON?





WHERE
WAS
IT?

I'VE SEEN
THESE
EYES...

WHERE
HAVE
I SEEN
THEM
BEFORE?

...
CHILLING
TO THE
BONE...



SO THE
THREAD
IS CUT,
AND HE
FALLS
BACK
INTO
HELL.

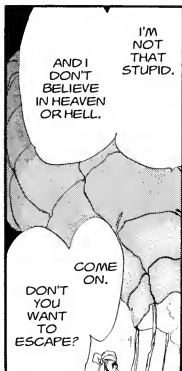
THE SPIDER
GIVES HIM A
THREAD TO
ESCAPE HELL,
BUT WHEN
THE OTHERS
CLIMB THE
THREAD, HE
KNOCKS
THEM
OFF.

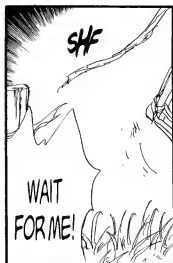
YOU
KNOW
THE
FABLE
ABOUT
THE
ROBBER
WHO
SPARED
THE
SPIDER?

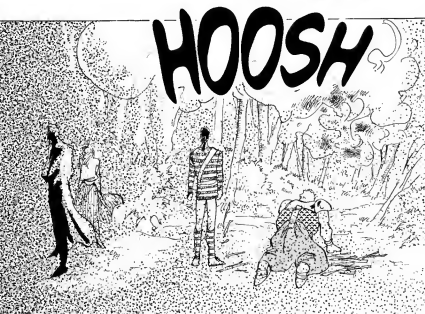
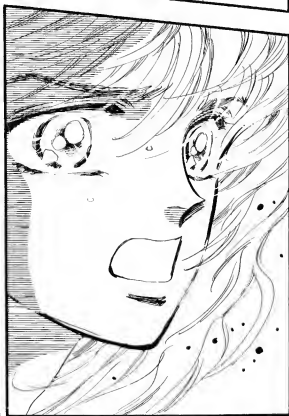
WHAT
!?

YOU
GO.

I'M
STAYING
HERE.









STUPID!
IT'S ALL
ALIE!

I WAS
JUST
WONDERING
IF THEYD
REALLY
GIVE OUT
ANY
PRIZE
MONEY!



HEH...

HEH
HEH
HEH
...

WHAT'S
SO
FUNNY?



SHOUL'DVE
JUST TILLED
MY FIELDS
LIKE AN
HONEST
MAN.

HA.

I SHOUL'DVE
LISTENED TO
MY MA WHEN
SHE TOLD ME
NOT TO DREAM
ABOUT GETTING
RICH QUICK.



NOW
...

IT'S
DOWN TO
JUST
THE FOUR
OF US...



WE'RE
ALL IN
THE
SAME
BOAT
HERE.

OH,
SAVE
YOUR
TEARS.



BUT I
KEPT
THINKING
...

...WE
WOULDN'T
HAVE
TO
STARVE.

...IF ONLY
MY VILLAGE
HAD SOME
MONEY...







IT'S
THE
SUZUKA
PASS!

I
DON'T
GET
HIM
AT
ALL!

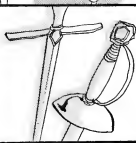
WE'VE
REACHED
HALFWAY...

HERE'S
WHERE
WE DOUBLE
BACK.

HE
HE
HE
HE
HE



WHAT'S
THIS
FOR?



FOUR
SWORDS
...



IN
PERSON!

THE
BLUE
KING!

WHERE
IS
HE?



YOU
HAVE
SURVIVED.

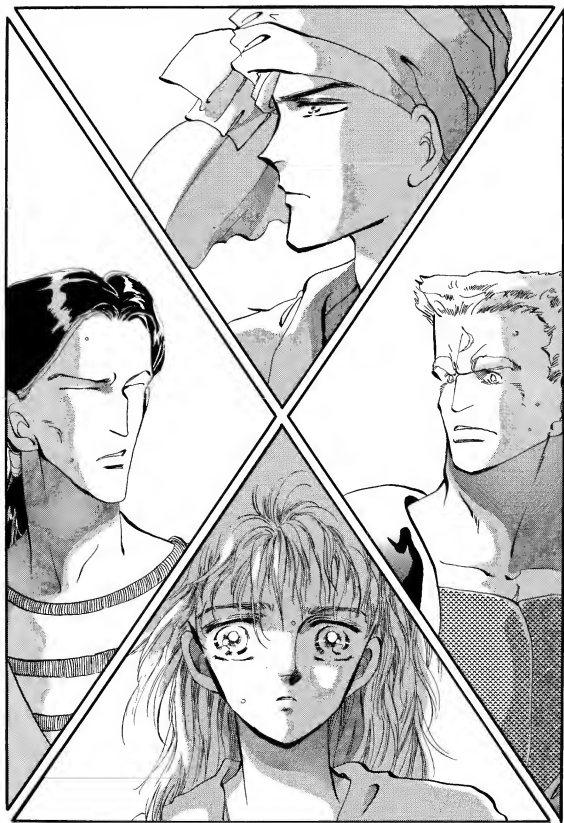
I
AM
THE
BLUE
KING.

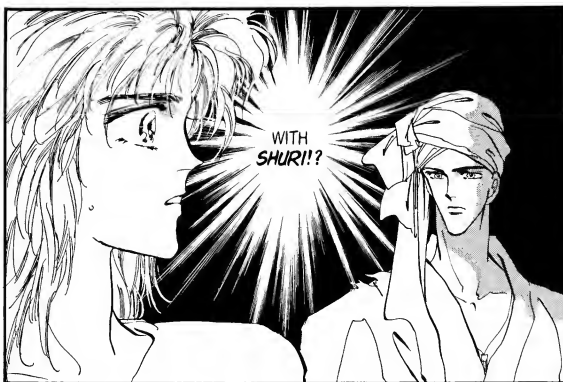
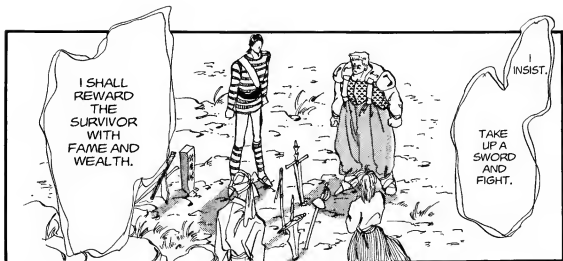


THE
BYAKKO
SWORD
!?

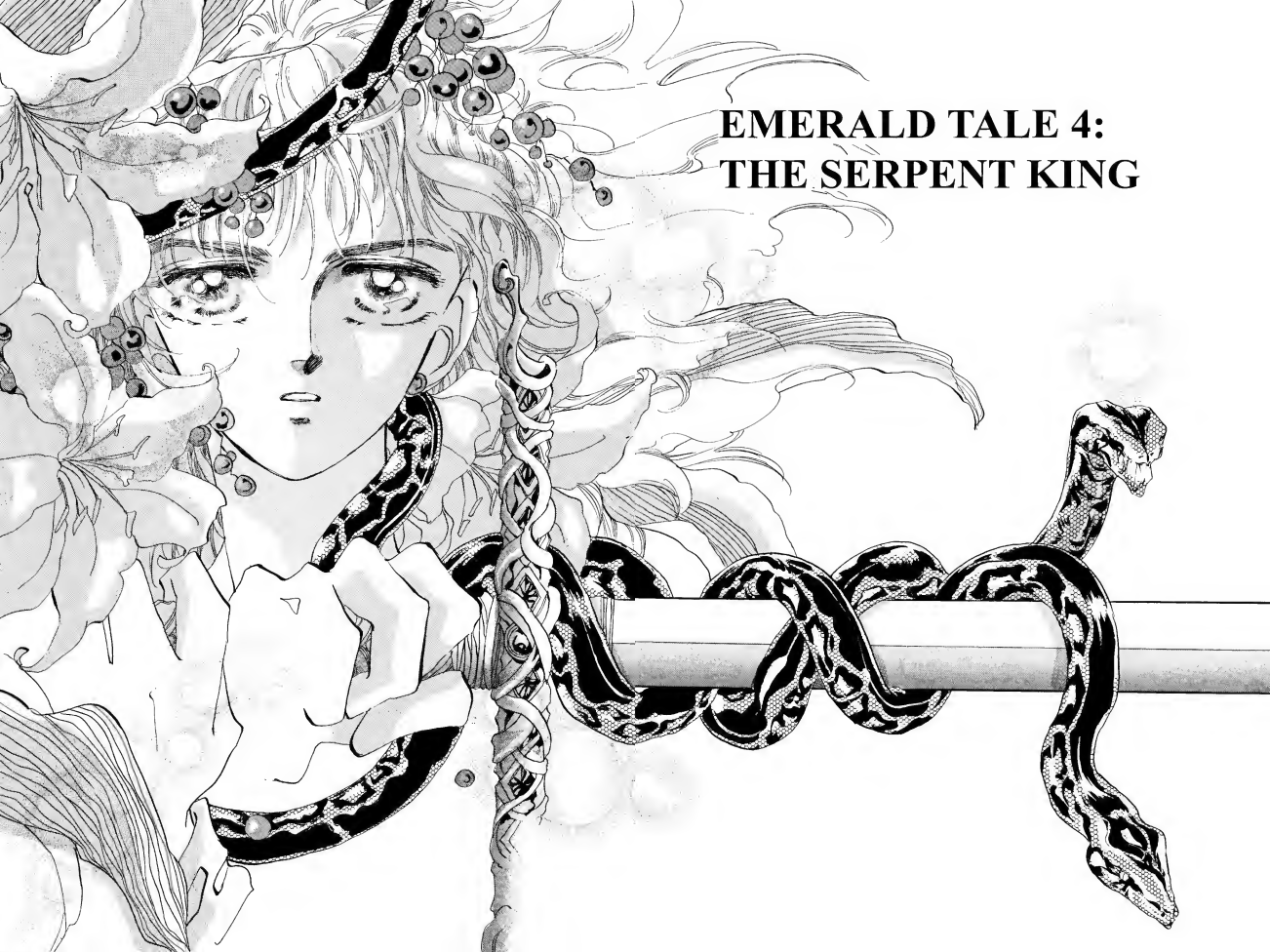


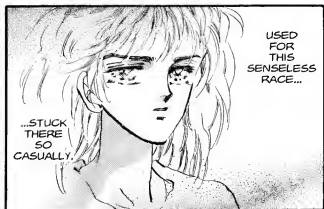
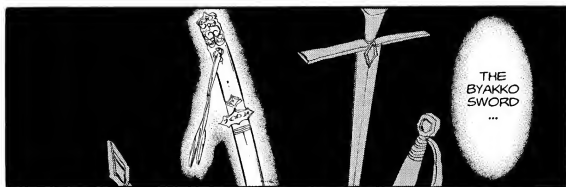






**EMERALD TALE 4:
THE SERPENT KING**





TINY TAM-TAM TIME ②

Since we're in Suzuka,
I had to put in a race! ♡
Tee hee! I like F1 racing too.

(I'm so at the mercy of fads...)™

I'd like to go see the real thing someday.

I'm not a fan of anyone in particular. Good luck to Mansell (he looks like Super Mario) and Senna. ♡ And Schumacher. You should all watch!™

TAMU.





AND THEY
JUST
TOSSED
IT HERE...

MY BROTHER'S
ONLY MOMENTO-

IT'S THE
ONE PROOF
THAT I'M
TATARA.

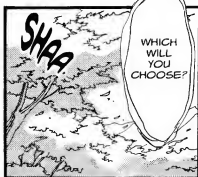


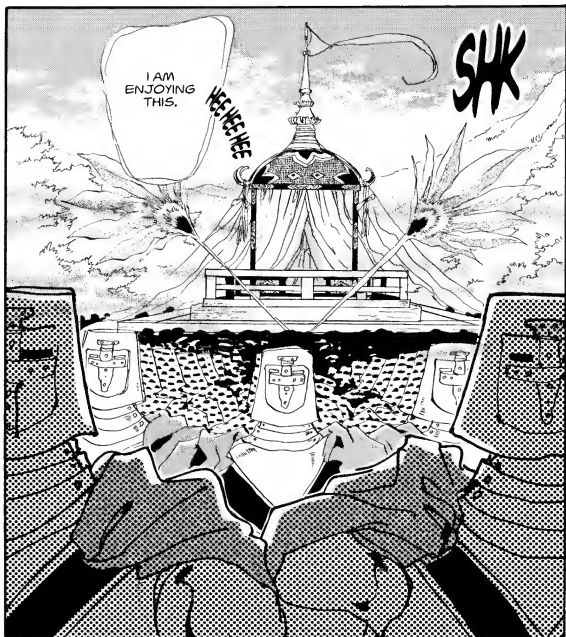
...LIKE
IT
WAS...

ANY
OTHER
SWORD,
AS IF...

...IT
HAD
NO
VALUE!









THINK
OF THIS
AS A
COLISEUM.

WHAT COULD
BE MORE
EXCITING
THAN A
FIGHT FOR
SURVIVAL?

HEE HEE HEE!

THE
BLUE
KING!







GAA! BAM

KA-TANG

RAAH!

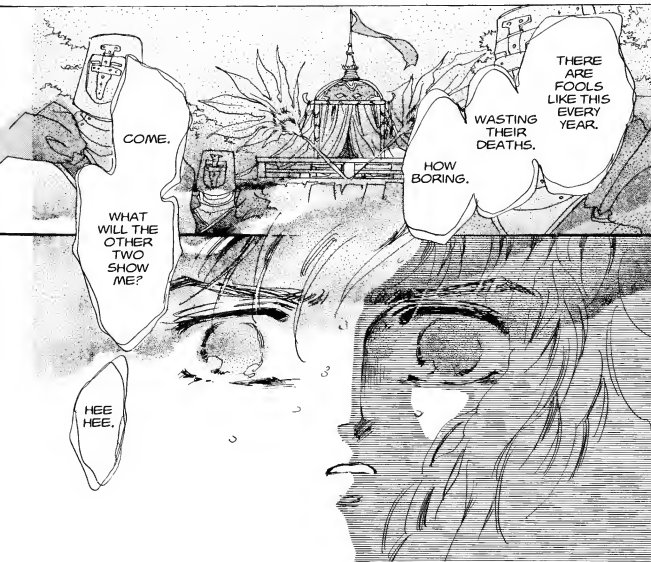
WAK!

K

LOOK
OUT!

THIS
IS
INSANE!

SW





QUICKER!

QUICKER
I SAY!

HEE
HEE.



KILL!

KILL
EACH
OTHER!



HO
HO
HO!

HEE
HEE!

HO
HO
HO!



STOP!

**STOP
LAUGHING!**

Wwwwww



KA-TAG

BZZG

SHUT
UP!

SHUT
UP!

SHUT
UP!

SHUT
UP!

HOW
DARE
SHE?

WHOA!



YOUR
SOUL
IS
IMPOVERISHED.



YOU'RE
ONLY A
KING
IN
NAME.

DON'T
YOU
FEEL!?

THAT
THEY
FEEL
SHAME
WHEN
THEY'RE
HUMILIATED?



DON'T
YOU
KNOW
THAT
HUMAN
BEINGS
FEEL
PAIN?

DO YOU
BLEED
RED
BLOOD!?

DOESN'T
IT HURT
WHEN
YOU'RE
INJURED?

... EVERYONE
THEY LEAVE
BEHIND
SUFFERS
IMMEASURABLY.

WHEN
PEOPLE
DIE...

WHEN
PEOPLE
DIE...





IF YOU
CAN'T
UNDERSTAND
EVEN
THAT-

BLUE
KING...

THEY
SUFFER...

BUT
THEY
CAN'T
CHANGE
ANYTHING.

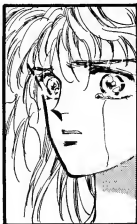
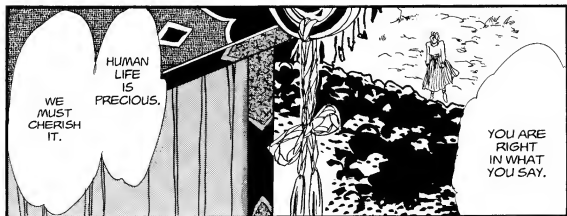
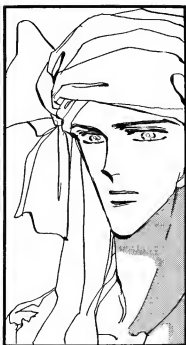
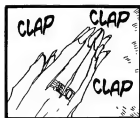
RED
KING...
CAN YOU
HEAR
ME!?

THEIR
DREAMS
ARE
BROKEN...

AND THEY
MAY
CURSE
AND
HATE...

BUT
THEY
CAN'T
SEE A
WAY
OUT.

YOU DON'T
DESERVE
TO BE
CALLED
KING!





YOU
AND I...

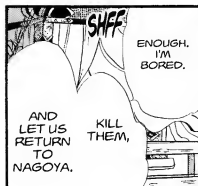
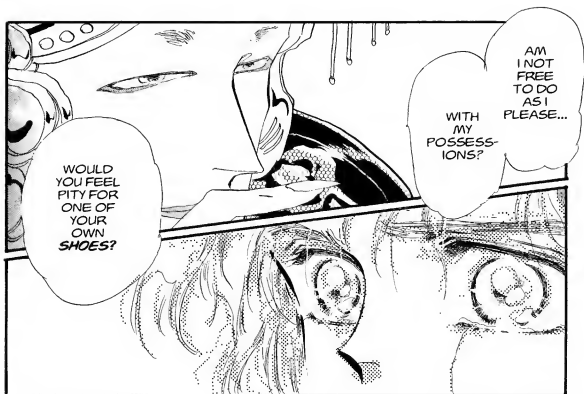
WE ARE
NOT THE
SAME
KIND OF
HUMAN.

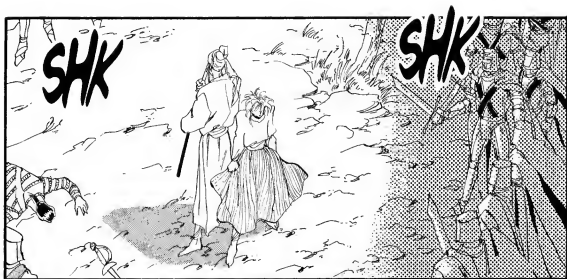
MY
LIFE IS
IMPORTANT.

YOURS
IS NOT.

MY
SUBJECTS
AND
SLAVES...

THEY
ARE
MERELY
MY
PROPERTY...





YOU
ARE
A
GOOD
WOMAN.

IF WE
ESCAPE
ALIVE,
MARRY
ME.



SHOULD
WE HAVE
ESCAPED,
JUST THE
TWO OF
US?

WHAT
WAS THE
RIGHT
THING
TO DO,
TATARA!?

IT'S
ALL
RIGHT,
SARASA.



I WISH
YOU
COULD
HAVE
GOTTEN
AWAY
ON
YOUR
BALLOON.

I...

FORCED MY
IDEAS
ONTO YOU,
PREVENTED
YOU FROM
GOING...

AND NOW
WE'RE ALL
GOING TO
DIE.

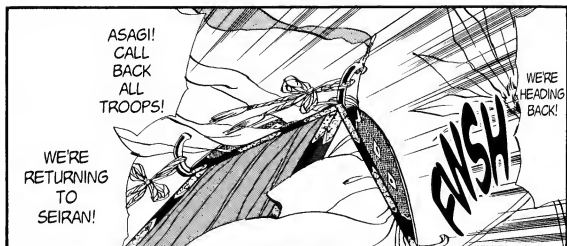


SHURI
...

SHURI...







ASAGI!
CALL
BACK
ALL
TROOPS!

WE'RE
RETURNING
TO
SEIRAN!

WE'RE
HEADING
BACK!

FWASH



EVEN IF WE
WERE TO CONQUER
THAT PLOT OF DIRT,
THERE'D BE NO
POINT IF SEIRAN
WERE TAKEN.

DON'T
BE
RIDICU-
LOUS!



CAREFUL
WHAT YOU
SAY,
LORD
ASAGI.

COWARD.



YOU'RE
NOTHING
BUT A
TIN
SUIT.

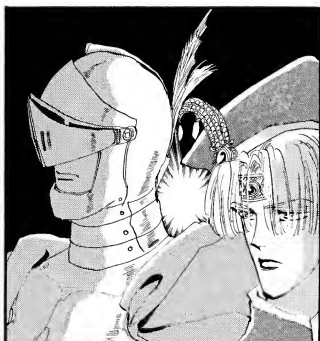
AND TO
WHOM
DO YOU
THINK
YOU'RE
TALKING?

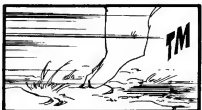


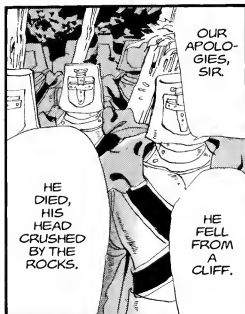
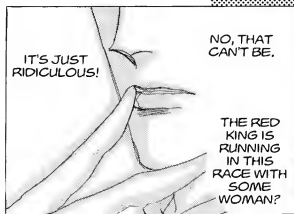
PARDON
ME,
SIRE.

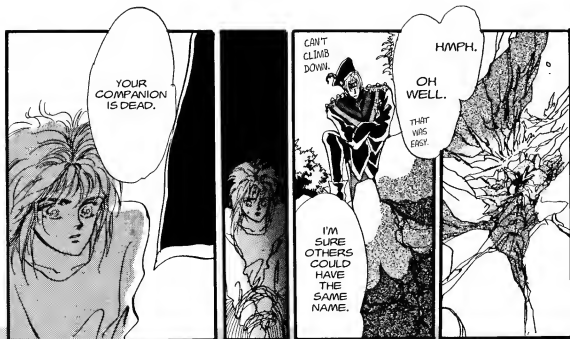
...NOW
IS YOUR
BEST
CHANCE
TO TAKE
SUO
CITY.

IF
THE
RED
KING
IS
ABSENT...



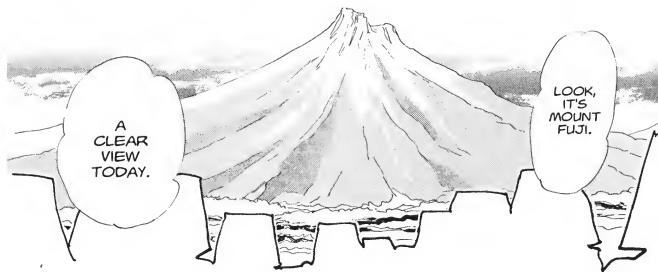
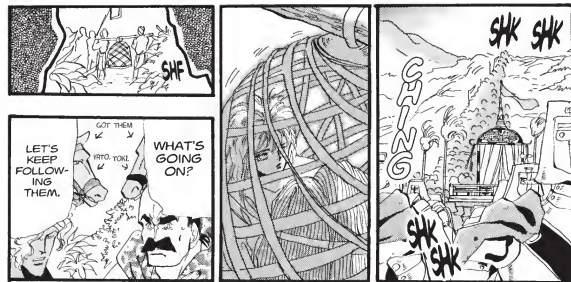
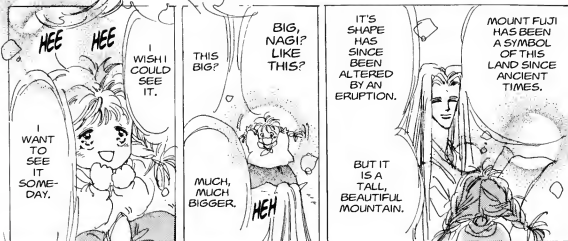


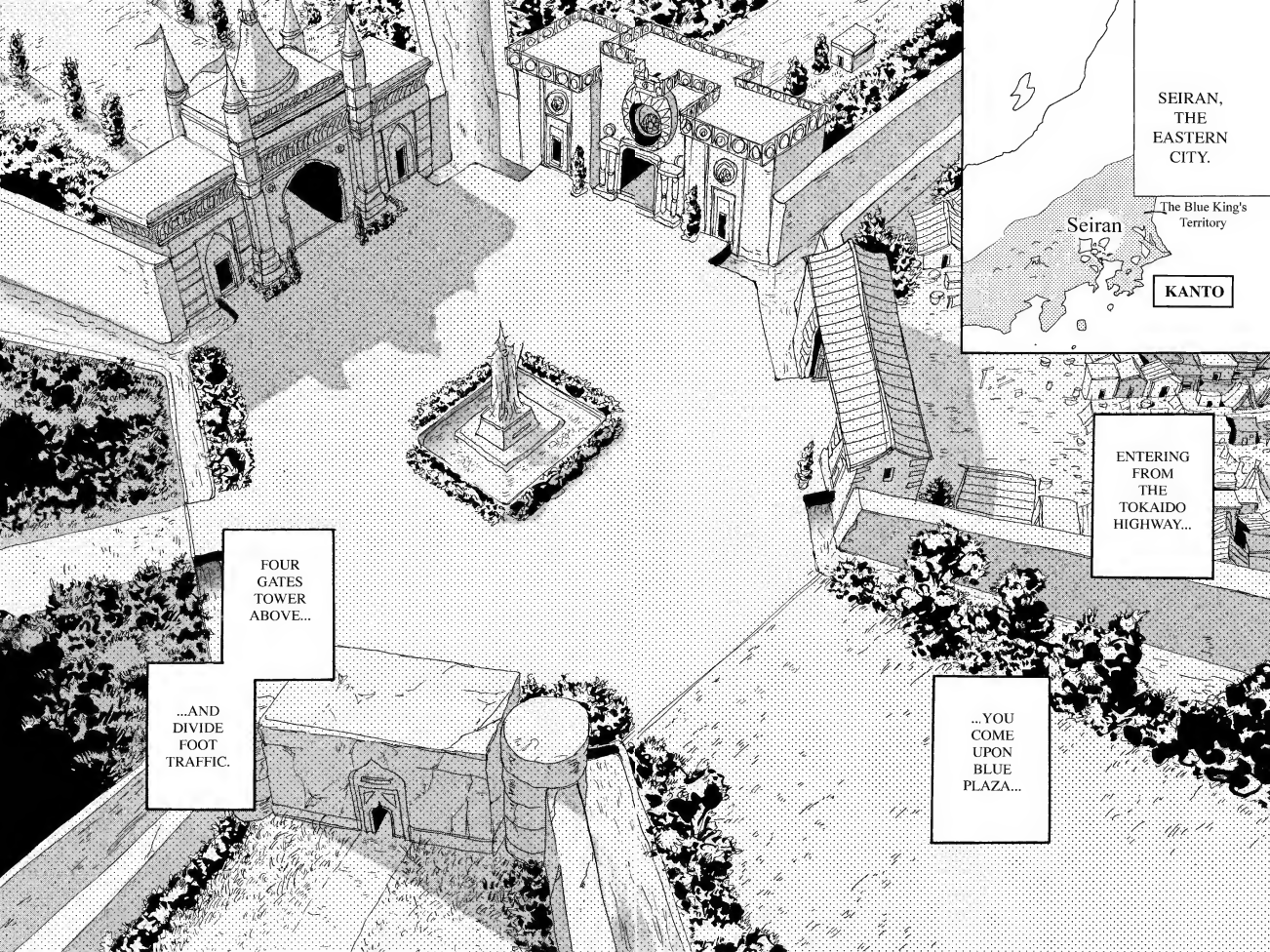




SHURI...







SEIRAN,
THE
EASTERN
CITY.

The Blue King's
Territory

Seiran

KANTO

ENTERING
FROM
THE
TOKAIDO
HIGHWAY...

FOUR
GATES
TOWER
ABOVE...

...AND
DIVIDE
FOOT
TRAFFIC.

...YOU
COME
UPON
BLUE
PLAZA...



THE KING HAS RETURNED.

THE KING...



NOT ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE CEREMONIES...

THAT IS THE SACRIFICIAL MAIDEN.



DON'T LET THE KNIGHTS BEAT YOU TO IT.

YOU CAN'T MISS HIM.

OUR REPUTATION IS RIDING ON THIS. BE ON THE LOOKOUT.

YES, SIR!



HE'LL BE EIGHTEEN THIS YEAR.

...AN OBNOXIOUS YOUNG MAN.



I'M CHECKING ON IT NOW.

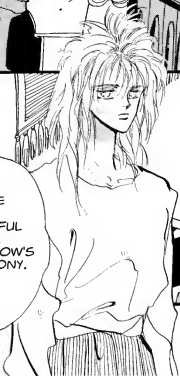
SIR,

IS HE REALLY HERE?

WE'VE TIGHTENED SECURITY.

NOBODY KNOWS WHAT THE RED KING LOOKS LIKE.

THE BLUE
PALACE.



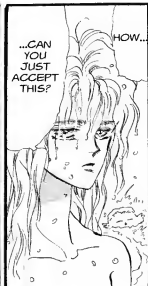
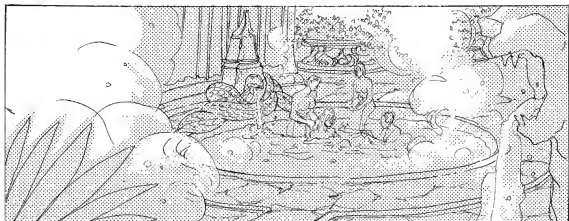
MAKE
HER
BEAUTIFUL
FOR
TOMORROW'S
CEREMONY.



BATHE
THIS
GIRL...



AND
DRESS
HER
AS
USUAL.





ONE
FOR
THE
KING.

YOU
MUST
HAVE
SEEN
THE
FOUR
GATES
ALONG
THE
WAY.

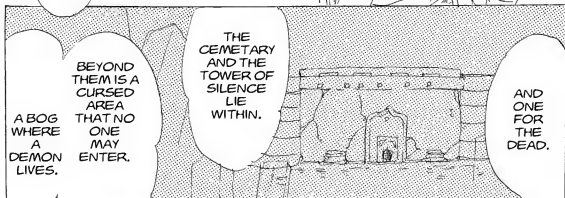
THE
CASTE
SYSTEM IS
HONORED
IN THIS
CITY.

ONE
FOR
NOBLES.

THAT'S
WHAT
THEY'RE
FOR.

RESIDENTIAL
AREAS ARE
DIVIDED
AS WELL.

ONE
FOR THE
COMMON-
ERS.

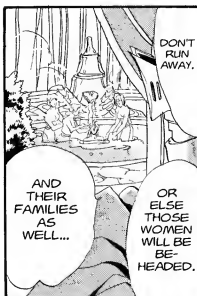


A BOG
WHERE
A
DEMON
LIVES.

BEYOND
THEM IS
A CURSED
AREA
THAT NO
ONE
MAY
ENTER.

THE
CEMETARY
AND THE
TOWER OF
SILENCE
LIE
WITHIN.

AND
ONE
FOR THE
DEAD.



DON'T
RUN
AWAY.

AND
THEIR
FAMILIES
AS
WELL...

OR
ELSE
THOSE
WOMEN
WILL BE
BE-
HEADED.



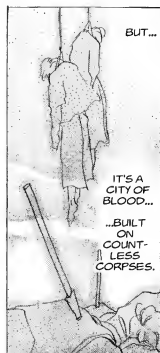
...AND TO
REVEAL
THE KING
AS A GOD.

CHK

AT THE
TOWER
OF
SILENCE.

YOU
ARE THE
OFFERING.

A
CEREMONY
IS
CONDUCTED
TO QUIET
THE
DEMON...



BUT...

IT'S A
CITY OF
BLOOD...

...BUILT
ON
COUNT-
LESS
CORPSES.



GOOD.

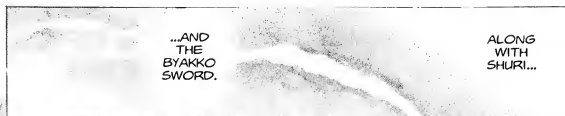
A
PLACE
OF
GLITTERING
GOLD

...LUSH
GREENERY
AND
FLOWERS.



NEVER.

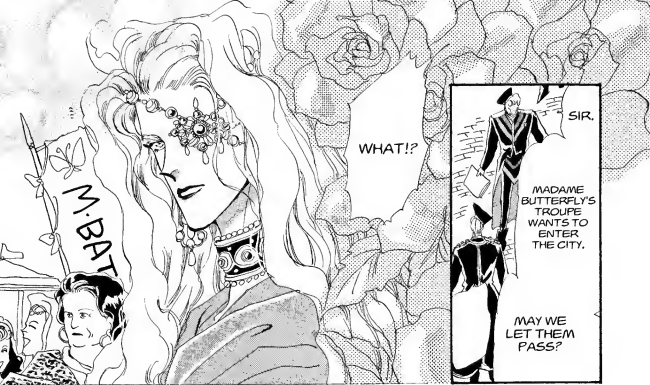
I'LL
NEVER
RUN.



...AND
THE
BYAKKO
SWORD.

ALONG
WITH
SHURI...





I'M SORRY
I'M BEING
SELFISH.

EVERY-
ONE...

NAGI...

I CAN'T
LET HIM GET
AWAY WITH
THIS-
NOT AS
TATARA,
BUT AS
MYSELF.

...DOWN
FROM
HIS
THRONE!

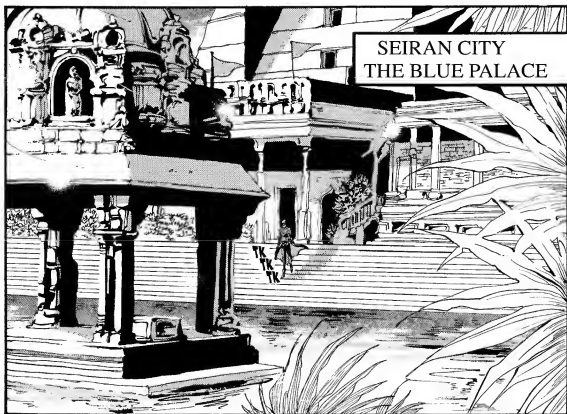
I
SWEAR
I'LL
DRAG
THE
BLUE
KING...



I
SWEAR
IT!

EMERALD TALE 5: THE BLUE DRAGON





TINY TAM-TAM TIME ③

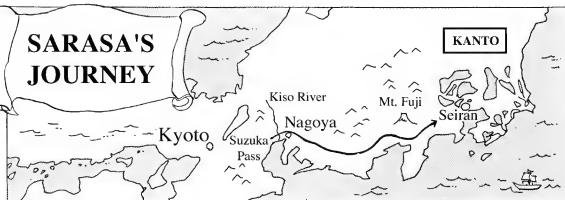
Recently...

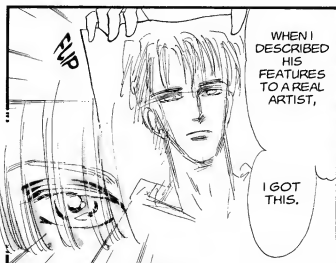
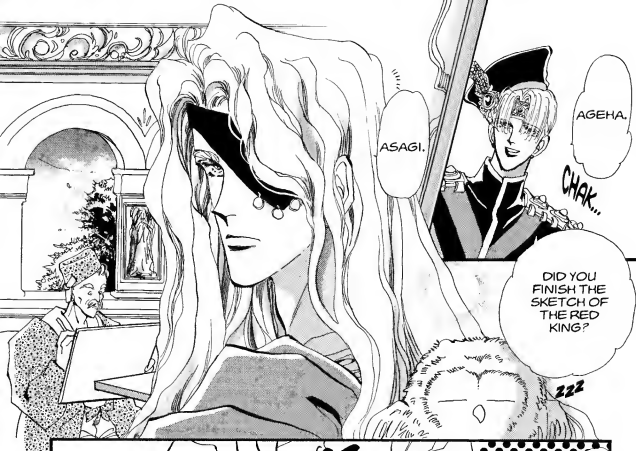
I heard that people are describing
'BASARA' as the manga with bald
guys and cross-dressers.

It's true, but I know
you love them!



SARASA'S JOURNEY







I MEAN-

THEY DO HAVE DIFFERENT MOTHERS.

HUH?



I'M NOT SURPRISED.



HE DOESN'T RESEMBLE THE BLUE KING AT ALL.



IS IT POSSIBLE?

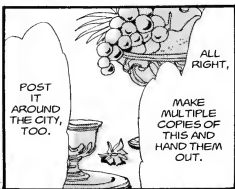


PERHAPS IT'S A HOAX DESIGNED TO CONFUSE US!?

NO PROOF HE'S HERE EITHER.

BUT...

CAPTAIN, WE CAN'T CONFIRM THAT THE RED KING LEFT SUO CITY.



ALL RIGHT,

MAKE MULTIPLE COPIES OF THIS AND HAND THEM OUT.

POST IT AROUND THE CITY, TOO.

...BUILT OUR MOST POWERFUL NAVY...

...AN BRILLIANTLY DODGED A WAR WITH A FOREIGN COUNTRY.

WHO KNOWS?

THIS IS A MAN WHO ESTABLISHED A PLENTIFUL CITY IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DESERT WHEN HE WAS SEVENTEEN...



...HOPE
TO MEET
HIM.

SOME-
DAY,

I...



...FOR
HURTING
YOUR
BEAUTIFUL
EYE.

AND
THEN...

I'LL MAKE
HIM PAY A
PRICE...



...YOU LOOK
CRUELER THAN
THE BLUE KING,
IF THAT'S EVEN
POSSIBLE.

...SOME-
TIMES...



AGEHA,

LET'S
HAVE
DINNER
TOGETHER!
WAIT FOR
ME.

CHAK

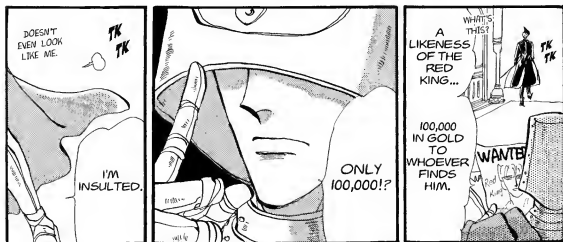
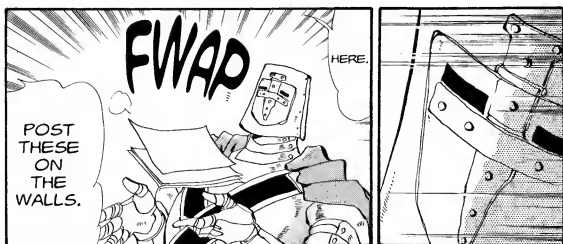
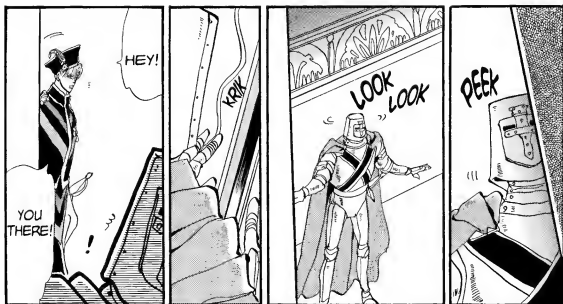
YOU
LOOK
INNOCENT
ENOUGH
WHEN
YOU'RE
SMILING.

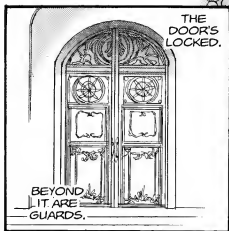
IN
TRUTH,

I AM
THE
SON
OF THE
DEVIL.

WELL
...

HEH





THE
DOOR'S
LOCKED.

BEYOND
IT ARE
GUARDS.



THERE ARE
IRON BARS
IN THE
WINDOWS.

THEY'RE
GUARDED, TOO.



HOW?

HOW
DO I
STRIKE
THE
BLUE
KING?



I'LL
BE
SACRIFICED
TOMORROW
NIGHT...

WHAT
DO I
DO!?





YOU
KILLED
HIM!

NOW
HE'S
GONE!

THERE'S
NOTHING
MORE
FOR ME
TO SAY
TO YOU!



POP



I HATE
IMPUDENT
WOMEN.

NGH!



GRO



YOU'LL
ONLY GO
INTO A
DEEP SLEEP,
FOR A DAY
AND A NIGHT.

DON'T
THROW
IT UP.
IT'S NOT
POISON.



IT WILL
ALL BE
DONE
WHILE YOU
SLEEP.

IT'S A
POWERFUL
DRUG.
YOU DON'T
HAVE TO FEAR
WAKING UP
DURING THE
CEREMONY.



SOON
YOU WILL
BE IN THE
BELLIES
OF THE
ALLIGATORS.



I MUST
NOT
SLEEP!

DON'T
SLEEP!



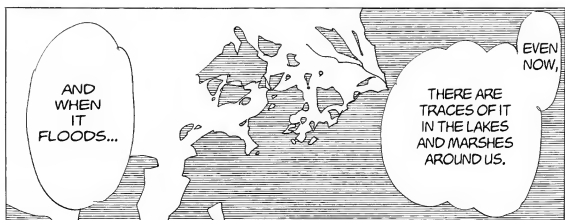
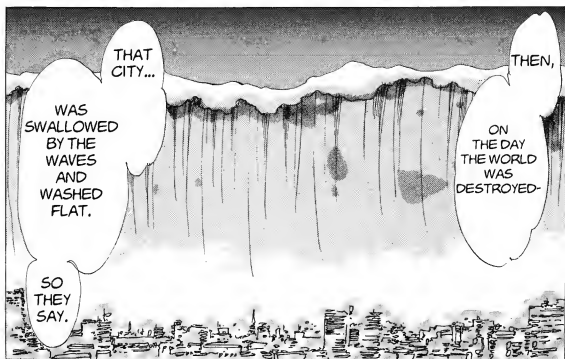
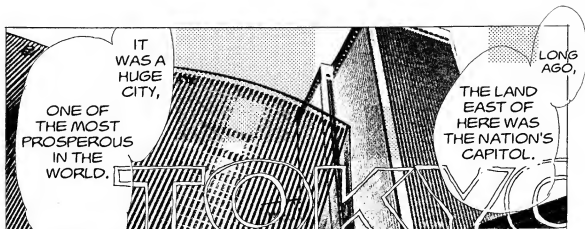
DON'T
SLEEP!



...WHILE
YOU
DRIFT
OFF TO
SLEEP.

HOW
ABOUT IF,
INSTEAD
OF A
LULLABY,

I TELL
YOU A
STORY...





CAN YOU
HEAR IT?



THE
PEOPLE OF
THE CITY
ALL TREMBLE
IN FEAR
OF IT.

THE
VOICE
FROM
THE
LAKE,

PAST
THE
GATE OF
THE
DEAD.

THEN HE
CARVES
OUT THE
HEART
OF THE
SACRIFICIAL
MAIDEN-

TEARS HER
INTO PIECES
AND OFFERS
HER TO THE
DRAGON.

WE
CONDUCT
THE
CEREMONY
TO PACIFY
IT.

THE
BLUE KING
PRAYS WITH
THE POWER
OF GOD.

THE
VOICE
OF THE
DRAGON
THAT
DWELLS IN
THE LAKE.

THE
BRING-
ER OF
FLOODS.





DON'T
SLEEP...



DON'T
SLEEP!

DON'T
SLEEP,
SARASA!

AND
SO
IT WILL
CON-
TINUE,

AS
LONG
AS THE
GREAT
DRAGON
SEES THAT
THE
BLUE KING
IS A GOD.



GOOD
NIGHT...

...FOR
ALL
TIME.

DON'T
WORRY.

YOU
WON'T
FEEL
ANY
PAIN.

WHAT A
DECREPIT
GATE.

CHF CHF

THEY
SAY THAT
TO SEE
A CITY'S
TRUE
NATURE...
ONE
MUST
OBSERVE
THE
LOWER
CLASS.

SECURITY
IS TOO
TIGHT-
WE CAN'T
GET
ANY
CLOSER.

LET'S
WAIT
FOR
OUR
CHANCE.

THERE
MIGHT BE
SOMETHING
WE COULD
REPORT TO
TATARA.

HISHA,

SHALL
WE GO
TAKE
A
LOOK?

WHAT
SHALL
WE DO
ABOUT
LORD
TATARA?

LIKE
ROTTEN
GARBAGE...

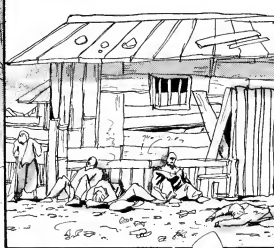
CHF CHF

KAKU
...

IT
SMELLS
FUNNY IN
HERE.

UHN!

NYU!



PLEASE,
HELP
US.

HELP
US.



NO-!

MOMMY,
MOMMY!

THE
NOBLES
CAME
BY
AGAIN.

THEY
KILLED
THREE
PEOPLE
TODAY.



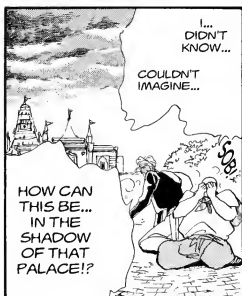
GAG!

HELP
US...



WE
NEED
MORE
MEDICINE...

AND
FOOD
...





ALL
POISON-
OUS.

AND A
SCORPION-

A
SPIDER,

A
SNAKE,
A
LIZARD.

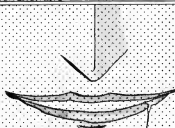
WE
HAVE
HERE...

SEE,
COUNT.

HEE
HEE
HEE!

THE
VENOM OF
THE
SURVIVOR
MUST BE
POTENT
INDEED.

IF ONE'S
OWN
POISON
CANCELS
OUT
ANOTHERS....



WHICH
VENOM
WILL BE
THE
MOST
POTENT?



I'M
POSTING
FLYERS,
SIR.

PAPPAP

TK
TK

WHAT
ARE
YOU
DOING
THERE?



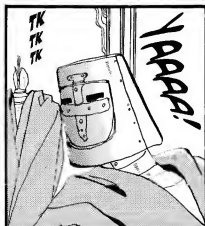
NOT
NOOO!
COME
HERE!



I WISH
TO TRY
IT OUT.

BRING
ME A
PAIR OF
SLAVES!

Y-YES,
SIR!



TK
TK
TK

YAPPAP!



GO
SOME-
WHERE
ELSE!

DON'T
PUT THEM
THERE.

YES,
SIR.

TK



HELLO..



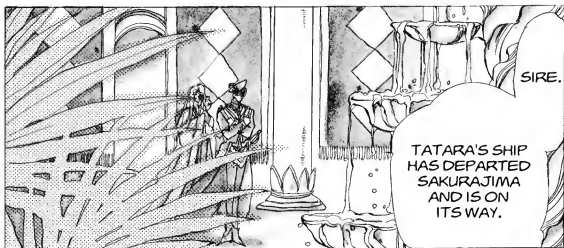
THE
COUNT
HAS NO
STOMACH
FOR
BRUTALITY.



HE IS NO
COUNT.

HE'S AN
UPSTART.

FEH.



SIRE.

TATARA'S SHIP
HAS DEPARTED
SAKURAJIMA
AND IS ON
ITS WAY.



226
226

COME!

COME
CLOSER!

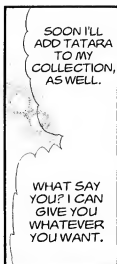


AGEHA!

WHY,
IT'S
AGEHA!

ASAGI...

AH!





AT
SUNSET,

THE
CEREMONY
BEGINS.



THE
NEXT
DAY.



02-26

THE SILENT
TOWER PEERS
FROM
THE LAKE...

AN ALTAR
STANDS
UPON ITS
SHORE.

THERE
IS A
LAKE
BEHIND
THE
CEMETERY.

WITHIN
THE
GATES
OF THE
DEAD.



AH,
AGEHA.
WHAT AN
ENCHANTING
DANCE.

IT'S TIME
TO LIGHT
THE
INCENSE.

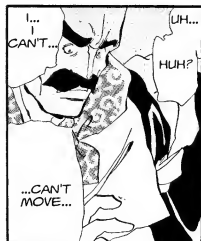


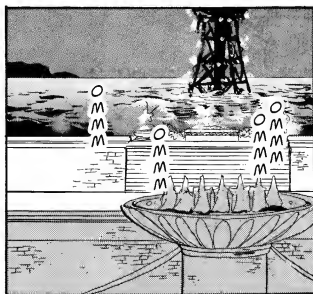
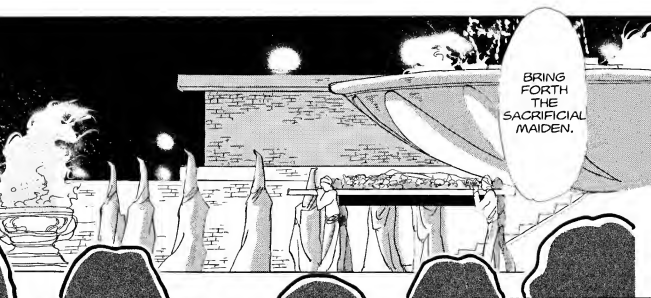
SO
MANY
PEOPLE.

IS
THIS
THE
WHOLE
CITY?

SECURITY
AROUND
THE PALACE
MIGHT BE
LOOSE
NOW...









WH-
WHAT
ARE
THEY
DOING?



CHANTING
AT THE
LAKE...



IN
THE
LAKE!

OVER
THERE!
LOOK!



SOME-
THING...

SOME
THING
IS
COMING
OUT!

SW
AAAAASH





THIS
CAN'T BE
REAL!

IS
IT...
A
DRAGON?
OR A
GIANT
SERPENT
!?

OH

AA



I COME
TO
APPEASE
YOU.

HARKEN
TO
ME.



RULER
OF
THE
WATERS.

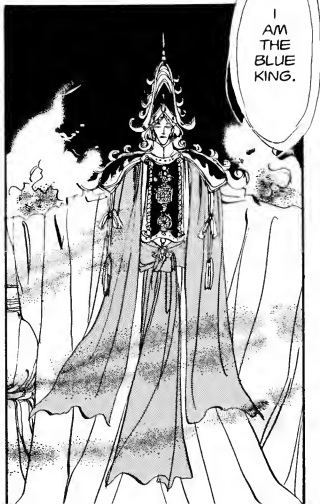
O
GREAT
DRAGON.



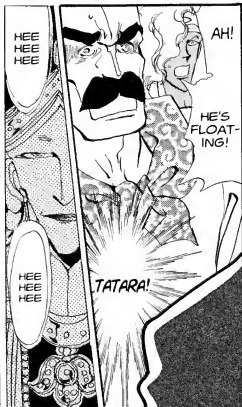
I
AM
A
GOD.



WITH
MY
POWER
I QUIET
YOU.



I
AM
THE
BLUE
KING.





OUR
GOD!

THE
KING!

HE IS
OUR
GOD!



WITH
THE
SWORD
OF
SEIRYU-

I TAKE
HER
HEART.

PASSED
FROM
MY
ANCES-
TORS-



O
DRAGON.

THIS
MAIDEN
I OFFER-

TO
CALM
YOUR
HUNGER.



THE
SEIRYU
SWORD!

ONE
OF THE
FOUR
SACRED
BLADES...

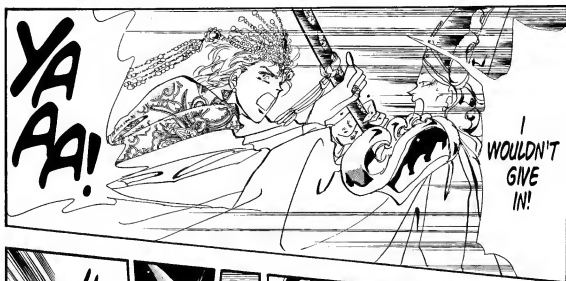
SO,

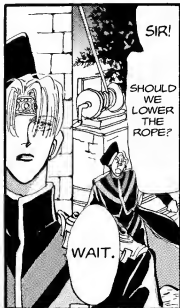
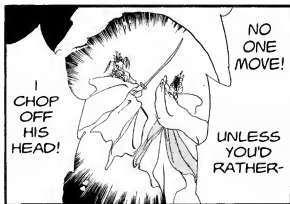
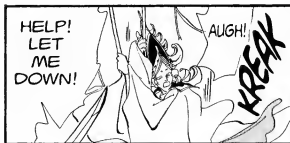
THAT'S
IT...

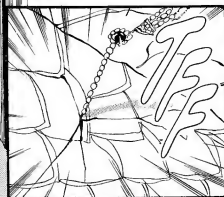


NO!!

N...







THE...
DRAGON
IT...

THE
DRAGON!



THIS MAN
IS NO
GOD!

HE'S A
STAGE
MAGICIAN!
**HE'S
TRICKING
YOU!**

YOUR
DRAGON
IS **FAKE!**

IT'S MADE
OF PAPER!



A
KING!
A
GOD!

I AM
DESTINED
TO RULE!

N...

NO-



SHURI...

...YOU
IDIOT.

YOU'RE
ONLY
GOING
TO DIE
SOONER!

IF YOU
BELIEVE
THAT
IDIOCY-

YOU
STUPID
FOOL!

I'M
DESTINED
TO SURVIVE.

I WON'T
DIE,
NOT
ME.

SHURI...



...I
REALIZE
HOW I
FEEL.

AFTER
THEY'RE
GONE...



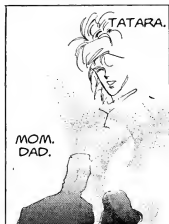
I MIGHT HAVE
COME TO LOVE
YOU EVEN MORE.

I LOVED
YOU, SHURI.



I WOULDN'T
ADMIT IT,
BUT DEEP IN
MY HEART I
RESENTED
EVERYONE.

I ALWAYS
RESENTED
THEM.



TATARA.

MOM.
DAD.



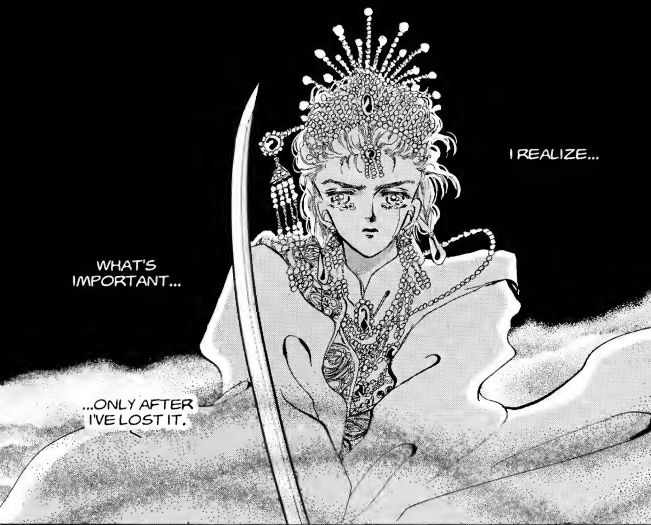
AND
ONCE
AGAIN...



I CAN NEVER
TELL THEM
I LOVE THEM...



THEY'RE
ALL
GONE
NOW.



I REALIZE...

WHAT'S
IMPORTANT...

...ONLY AFTER
I'VE LOST IT.



SPEAK!

APOLOGISE
TO YOUR
PEOPLE
FOR
DECEIVING
THEM!



YOU'RE
NOT EVEN
WORTH
STAINING
THIS
BLADE.

I ONLY
WANT TO
DRAG YOU
DOWN
FROM THE
THRONE.



I...

DO
NOT
INTEND
TO
DIE
HERE
WITH
YOU.

THERE'S
STILL
TOO MUCH
I HAVE
TO DO.

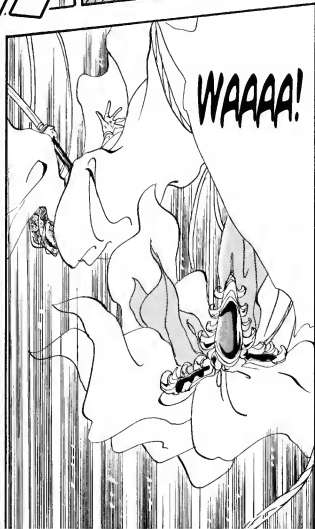


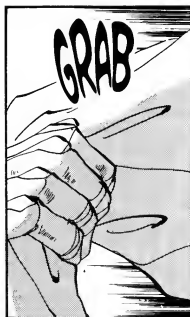
I DON'T
KNOW
ANYTHING!

SAVE
ME!

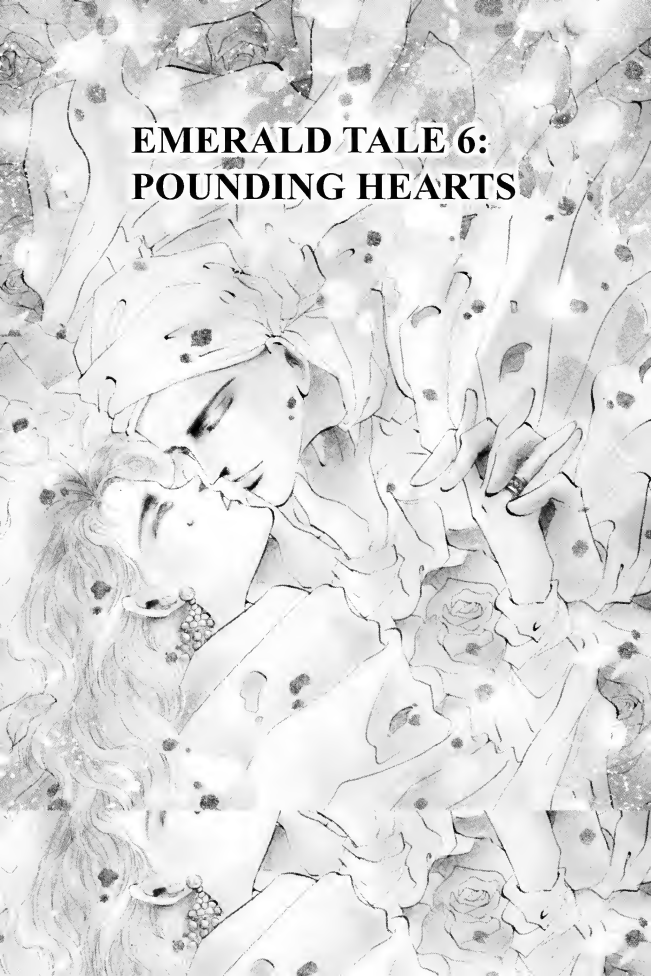
IT'S
ASAGI!!
IT'S ALL
ASAGI'S
FAULT!







**EMERALD TALE 6:
POUNDING HEARTS**





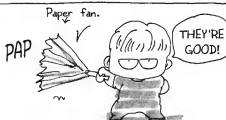


TINY TAM-TAM TIME ④

I'm always getting asked which TV personalities I like best. My current favorite is "Downtown."

(Actually, I've liked this comedic duo for a while now.)

I always make sure to tape whatever show they're on.



I don't usually like any one TV celeb over any other's.

But I still like them... ♡ TAMU

SARASA'S JOURNEY





IF I
WANTED
TO KILL
YOU, YOU'D
BE DEAD
ALREADY.

THERE
ARE
SOME
PEOPLE
I WANT
YOU TO
MEET.



WHERE
ARE
YOU
TAKING
ME?

WE'RE
GOING
FURTHER
AWAY
FROM THE
CITY!



YOU
CAN
PUT
YOUR
SWORD
AWAY
NOW.



...AMONG
THE
RIVERS
AND
LAKES...

IN
THIS
AREA...

...THE
KING HAD
SECRET
FLOODGATES
BUILT.

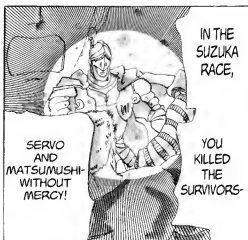


.....



YOU'RE THE
LEADER OF
THE BLUE
KING'S
KNIGHTS!

WHY
SHOULD
I
TRUST
YOU!?



IN THE
SUZUKA
RACE,

SERVO
AND
MATSUMUSHI-
WITHOUT
MERCY!

YOU
KILLED
THE
SURVIVORS-



...TO
CREATE
THE
FLOODS.

HE'D
OPEN
THEM
ONCE
IN A
WHILE...

SO
THAT HE
COULD
CONTROL
THEM.

PARA-
LYZING
THEM
WITH
FEAR.

HE
MADE
PEOPLE
BELIEVE
THERE
WAS A
DRAGON-



TRESPASSING
IS STRICTLY
FORBIDDEN.

トク
トク

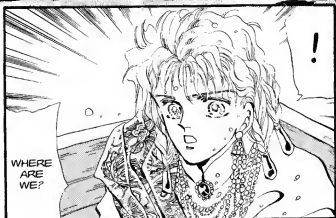
THIS
AREA
IS THE
SUPPOSED
DRAGON'S
LAIR.



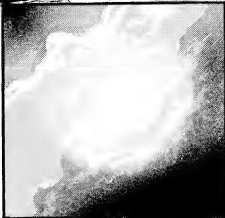
THEY'RE
NOT
ROCKS.

LOOK
CLOSELY.

SUCH
HUGE
ROCKS...



WHERE
ARE
WE?



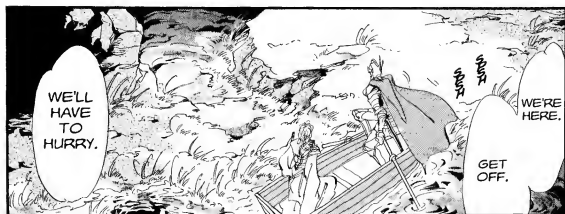
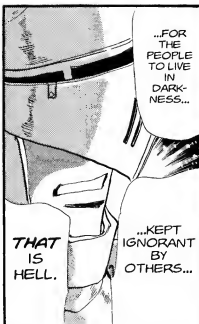


THESE
ARE THE
RUINS OF A
CIVILIZATION
THAT
PROSPERED
LONG AGO.

...SO HE
COULD
CLAIM
THE
MONARCHY
STRETCHED
BACK
FOREVER.

THE BLUE
KING MADE
SURE
NO ONE
SAW
THEM...

THESE
TRACES
OF OUR
ANCESTORS'
LIVES...





UNDER-
GROUND...!?



IN
HERE.
ANOTHER
RELIC
OF OUR
ANCESTORS.



THIS
WAY.



THIS
REMINDS
ME
OF THE
KANMON
TUNNEL....



WE'VE
BEEN
WAITING
FOR
YOU!

COUNT!

AH!
IS
EVERYONE
HERE?

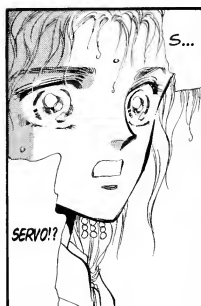


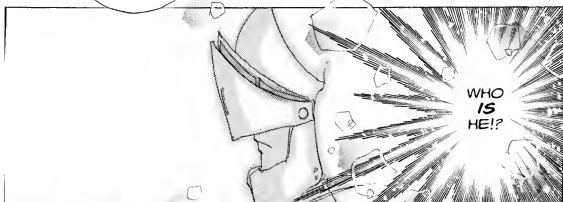
IT'S
LIKE
A
MAZE,

SPRAWL-
ING
FOR
MILES.

MOST
HAVE
COLLAPSED
INTO
DEAD ENDS.

THERE
ARE
INTRICATE
PATHS AND
CROSS PATHS.







THANK
YOU.

TONEL.



WHEN
DID...?

SO A
REBEL
ARMY'S
BEEN
GROWING
HERE?

DID
THE
IRON
MASK
START
IT?



YOUR
VOICE...



LINE
UP THE
FIRST
SQUAD!

BRING
THE
BOWS!

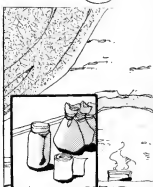
SHE'S
SOAKED.

COULD
YOU
GIVE HER
NEW
CLOTHES?

IZUMI.



WHY...?



THANKS.



OH.

IT'S
NOTHING...
REALLY.



DID THE
BLUE KING
DO THIS
TO YOU?

HOW
TERRIBLE!



ALL
WAITING...

...HERE
UNDER-
GROUND.

IZUMI.

STAY HERE
WITH THE
WOMEN.



ALL
WAITING
FOR THE
CHANCE
TO
OVERTHROW
HIM...



SER-
VO...

HEH.

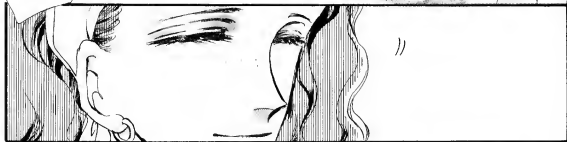
WE'RE
A
GATHER-
ING OF
GHOSTS.

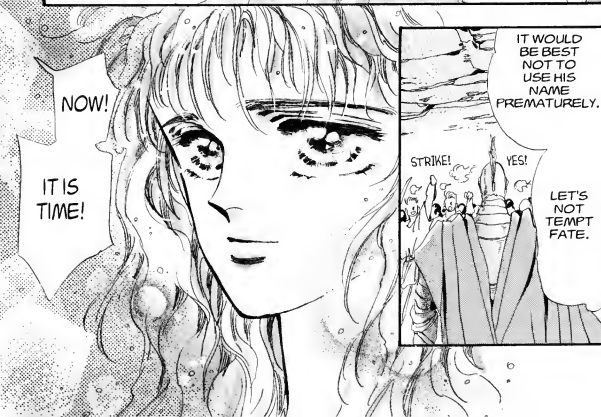
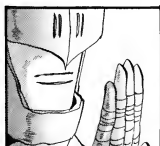


WE'VE
BEEN
BROUGHT
TOGETHER
AROUND
A
COMMON
GOAL.

SLAVES
WHO
SHOULD
HAVE
BEEN
KILLED.

DEATH-ROW
INMATES
WHO
DEFIED
THE KING.







UM...

WELL...

...YOU
STILL
LOOK
TROUBLED.



LET ME
TELL YOU
THIS.



IT WAS
ONLY
A FEW
DECADES
AGO THAT
THE KANTO
REGION
WAS TAKEN
OVER BY
THE BLUE
KING.

MY
PEOPLE
HELD
THEIR
GROUND
BY THIS
LAKE,
WITH THAT
SWORD
IN HAND.



THE
REBELS
WHO ONCE
KEPT THE
SEIRYU
SWORD...

I AM THE
SURVIVOR
OF
THAT
CLAN.



THE
TUNNELS
HAVE MANY
OUTLETS
TO THE
SURFACE.

WE'VE
GRADUALLY
DUG OUT
THOSE
THAT
WERE
BURIED.

THERE'S
EVEN ONE
THAT COMES
OUT QUITE
NEAR THE
BLUE PLAZA.



WHY
...

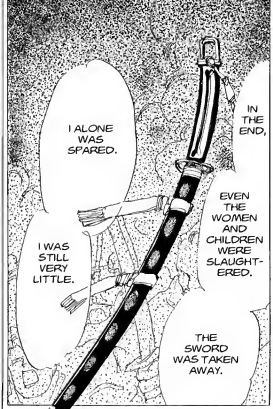
...WERE
YOU THE
ONLY ONE
WHO WAS
SPARED?



ABOUT
TEN
YEARS
LATER,

THE
BLUE
KING
CAME
TO THIS
LAND.

HE
WAS
JUST
A CHILD.



I ALONE
WAS
SPARED.

I WAS
STILL
VERY
LITTLE.

IN
THE
END,

EVEN
THE
WOMEN
AND
CHILDREN
WERE
SLAUGHTERED.

THE
SWORD
WAS TAKEN
AWAY.



TO
THE
SURFACE!



NOVEL-
TY?

LET'S
GO!



WHO
KNOWS?

PERHAPS
BECAUSE
I WAS
A NOVELTY.

RAAAA!



DO
NOT
FEAR!

EEE
BZZ
BZZ

THAT'S
THE
VOICE
OF THE
WIND!

THERE
IS NO
DRAGON
IN THE
LAKE!

N-NO
...

UH...

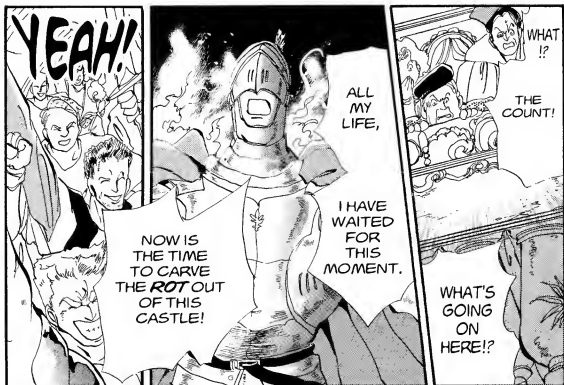
SHOCEE
SHOCEE
EEE
LISTEN!
DO YOU
KNOW
WHAT
YOU'VE
DONE!?

LEAVE!
OR YOU'LL
ALL DIE!

IT'S THE
DRAGON
IN THE
LAKE!

IT'S
ALL
A
LIE!

THE
KING
MADE IT
ALL
UP!





WE
FIGHT-

FOR
LIBERTY!

FOR
THE
END OF
KINGS!

oooooooooh



GOLDEN
HAIR...

...AND
BLUE
EYES...



BECAUSE
OF ITS
COLOR,
THE KING
FOUND ME
DIVERTING.

I
DON'T
KNOW
WHY
MY
HAIR
IS
THIS
WAY...

AT LEAST UNTIL I WAS SCARRED.



A
LION...

WE
ARE
LED
BY A
LION!

LOOK
AT
HIS
MANE!

A GOLDEN
MANE!



THE
BLUE ARMY
WILL ALSO
SOON
RETURN
FROM
SUO.

WHO
KNOWS
WHAT THE
RED KING
MIGHT
DO...

THE
BLACK KING
OF THE NORTH
WILL NOT
STAND BY
AND LET
THIS HAPPEN.

HE AND
KING UKON
IN KYOTO
WILL SEND
ARMIES.

BUT
...

WE CAN
WIN THIS
BATTLE
EASILY.

THE
CITY IS
OURS.

BUT?

...AGAINST
THOUSANDS
OF
SOLDIERS?

WILL WE
STAND
A
CHANCE....

IF THIS
LAND
BECOMES
A
BATTLE-
FIELD,

THIS
MAY
BE A
RIVER
WE
CANNOT
SWIM
AGAINST.

PER-
HAPS.

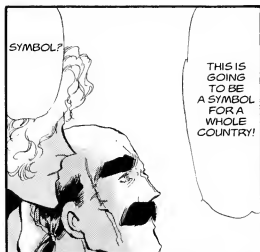
BUT
HISTORY
BROUGHT
YOU
HERE.

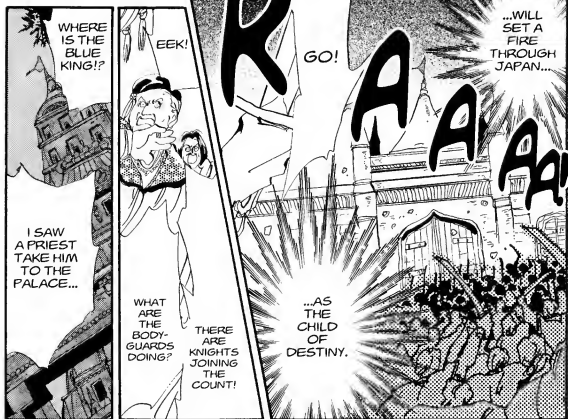
I
HADN'T
THOUGHT
OF IT
THAT
WAY.

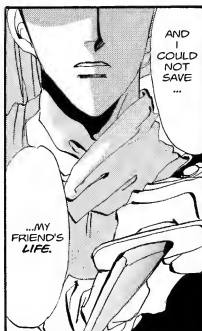
DID I
START
SOMETHING
THAT WE
CAN'T
TURN BACK
FROM....?

OH...

I...









FOR A
MAN
LIKE
YOU,
THERE
ARE...

...MORE
FITTING
WAYS TO
DIE.



BUT...

I WON'T
GIVE
YOU AN
INSTANT
DEATH,
AFTER
ALL...

...YOU
ARE MY
OLDER
BROTHER.



YAAAA!

IT
HURTS!

S-SOMEONE...

ANYONE!



OVER
THERE!

WHAT'S
THAT?

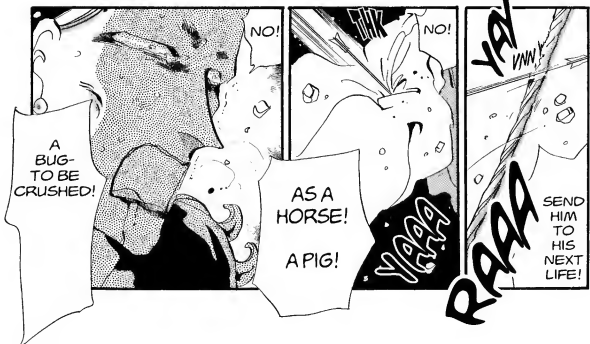
LOOK!

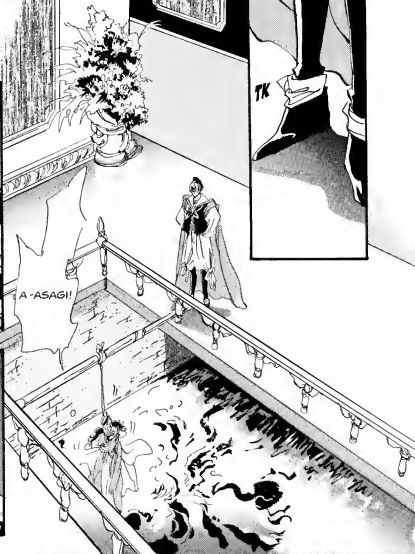


THE
BLUE
KING!

BY
THE
PALACE!

THAT'S...



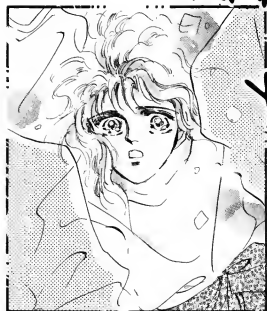
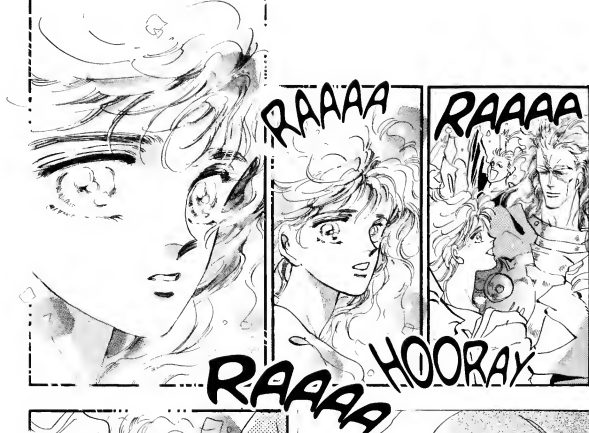








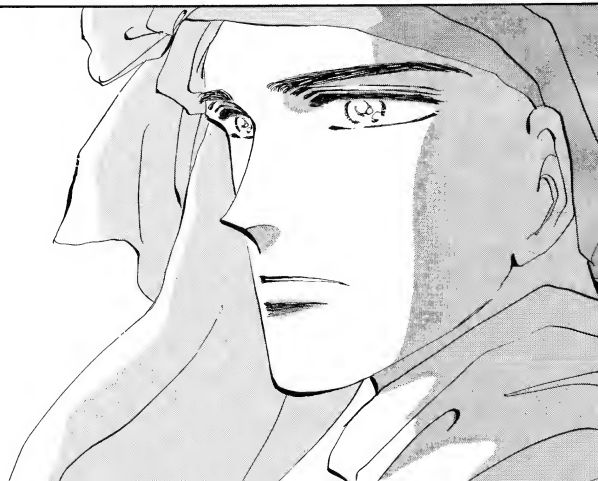
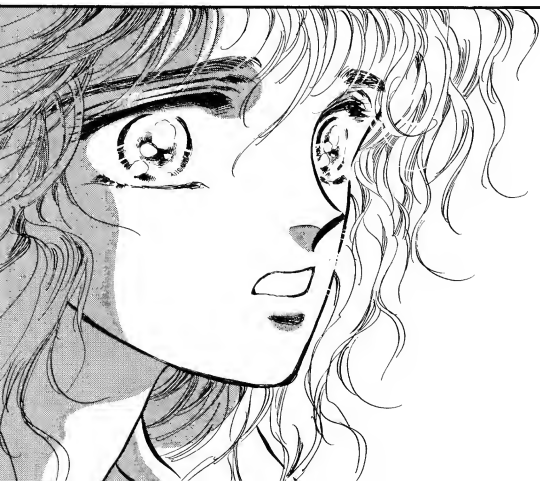


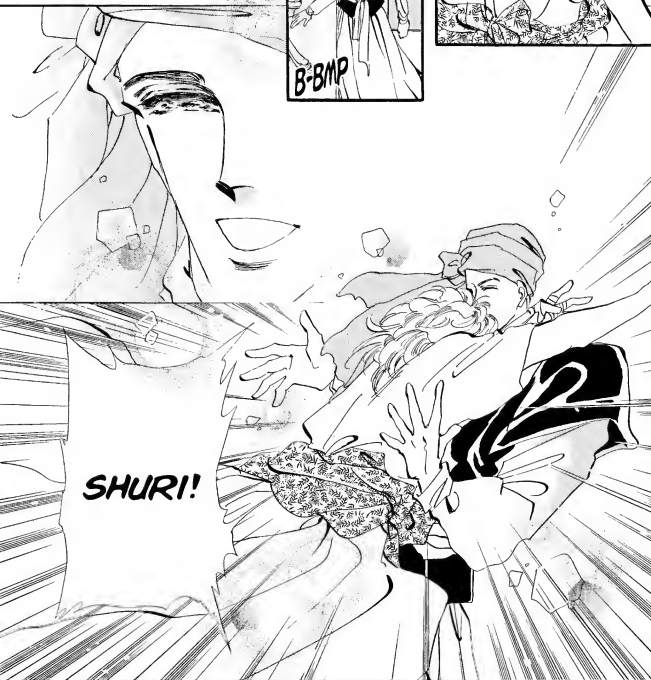


YAAA













SHURI...

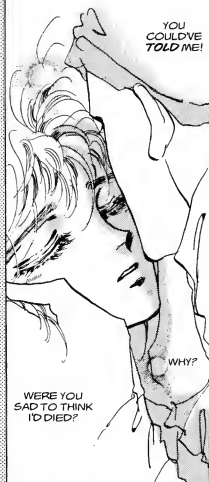
...THAT
I CAN
SEE YOU
AGAIN.
.....

YEAH.

I'M
HAPPY,
TOO...

SHURI...

SHURI...



YOU
COULDN'T
TOLD ME!



THEN I
DISGUISED
MYSELF
AS A
KNIGHT.

I MADE
THEM
THINK
I FELL
OFF A
CLIFF.



WHEN
I HEARD...

THEY
WERE
TAKING
YOU TO
SEIRAN...

...I
FIGURED
YOU'D BE
SAFE FOR
THE TIME
BEING.



WHY?

WERE YOU
SAD TO THINK
I'D DIED?

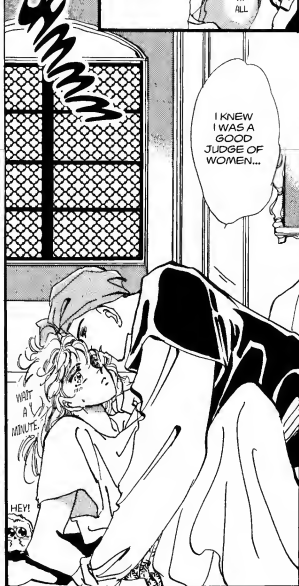


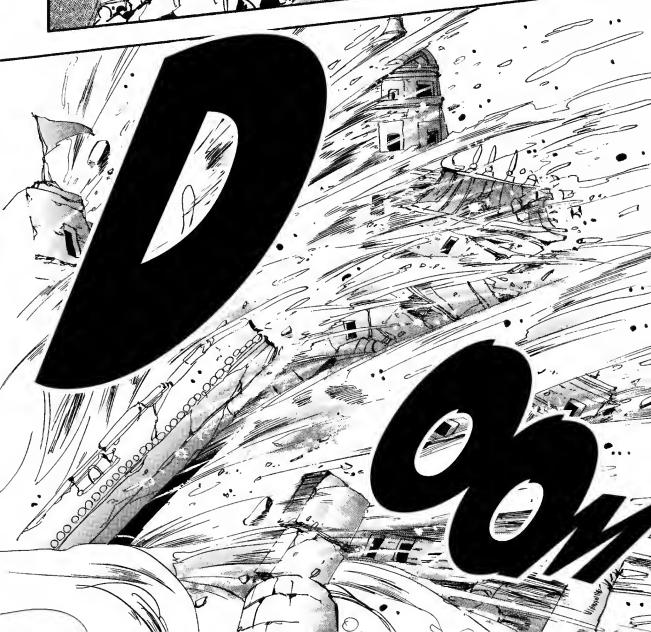
WHY?

SHURI...
YOU'RE SUCH
A JERK!

BECAUSE
WHAT?

BECAUSE.







SHURI!

DM

WHOA!

KREK

SARASA!

HSH

FO

IF WE
GET
SEPA
RATED

LISTEN!

SARASA!

I HAVE
TO GO BACK
TO SUO
RIGHT
AWAY!

COME
TO THE
RED
KING'S
PALACE!

GO TO
SUO!

FOOSH

I CAN'T
HEAR
YOU!

WH-

WHAT!?

GO TO
THE
RED
PALACE!

KRAK

SARASA!

KRAK

I CAN'T
HEAR
YOU!

SHURI!

SHAMMM





...MY
DEAR
LITTLE
BROTHER.

SHURI...

IVE
WANTED
TO
MEET
YOU.

TAM-TAM TIME EXTRA

SHINBASHI GOES HOME



SKRIRK



TIP TUP TIP TUP

I LOOK AFTER
THE YOUNG
ONES.

VWIP



I'M NIHONBASHI,
THE ELDEST.

YANAGIBASHI,
WHAT...?

HEY!



MM?

TIP TUP



BROTHER
DEAR!

'EY,
PARDNER!

I WORRY
ABOUT YOU
SOMETIMES...

I'M
PRETEND-
ING I AM
AGEHA!

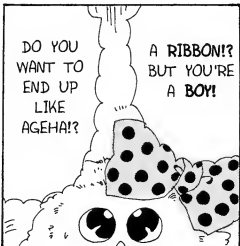
LISTEN
UP!

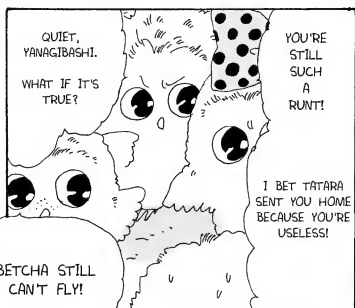


WIGGLE

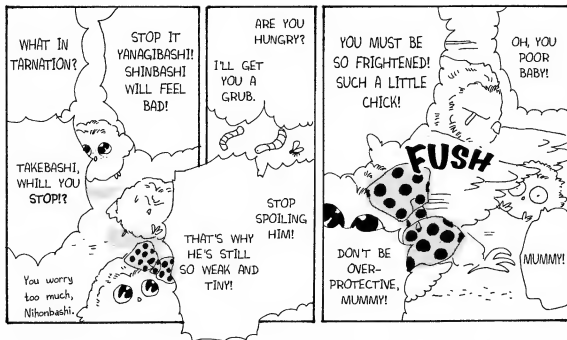
DO YOU
WANT TO
END UP
LIKE
AGEHA!?

A RIBBON!?
BUT YOU'RE
A BOY!





~ Baby of the family.



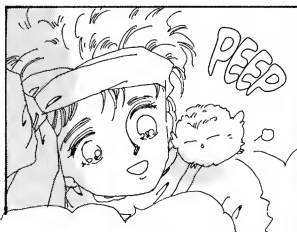
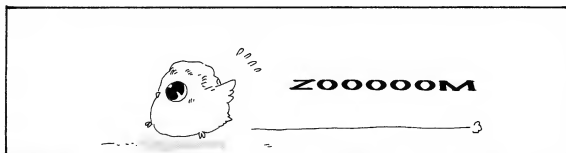
I CROSSED AN OCEAN AND SAW A
VOLCANO ERUPT.

I BATHED IN A HOT SPRINGS AND
FLOWN IN A RACE WHERE PEOPLE
WERE KILLED.

IVE EVEN SEEN ALLILGATORS AND
A DRAGON.

I'M BRAVE NOW, MUMMY.





YOU SHOULD LET
YOUR MOM AND YOUR
BROTHERS SPOIL YOU.

YOU DON'T SEE
YOUR FAMILY
OFTEN.

They're all with Madam Butterfly.

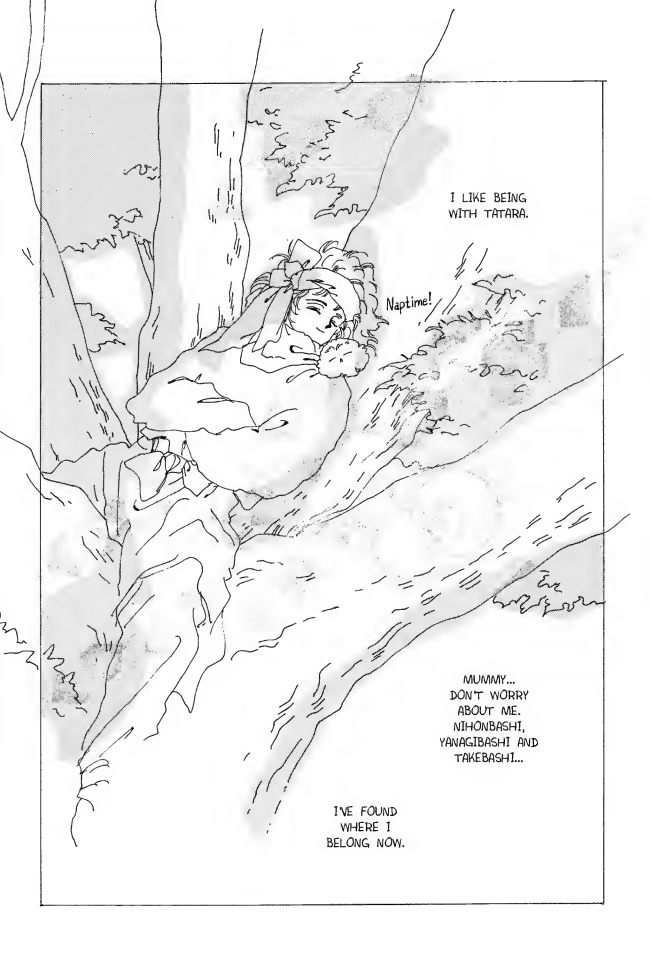


ARE YOU
DONE WITH
YOUR VISIT?

I BET THEY WERE
SURPRISED HOW
GROWN UP YOU ARE
NOW.

WHAT'S THE
MATTER,
SHINBASHI?
DID YOU TELL
THEM ALL
SORTS OF
STORIES?

It's a secret.



I LIKE BEING
WITH TATARA.

Naptime!

MUMMY...
DON'T WORRY
ABOUT ME.
NIHONBASHI,
YANAGIBASHI AND
TAKEBASHI...

I'VE FOUND
WHERE I
BELONG NOW.



WHEN I GROW UP
AND GET BIG LIKE
DADDY...

...I PROMISE
I'LL HELP
YOU.

WAIT FOR ME
TO GROW UP,
TATARA....

YOU'LL
SEE...

■ TAM-TAM TIME BONUS PAGE ■



Hi! How are you? Thank you so much for being with me for 5 volumes!
I'm doing my best here, so please stick around for more! See you again!

■ More FAQ's!

Q Tell us what's fun and what's difficult about being a manga artist.

A It's hard when I can't think up ideas for a story... and when I'm sleepy... It's great to be able to draw manga all the time.
Which happens all the time.
I'm sorry this is so brie.



I'M ALWAYS LOOKING FOR NEW ASSISTANTS. SEND ME ANYTHING YOU'VE DRAWN, EITHER THE ORIGINAL OR A PHOTOCOPY. YOU ONLY NEED TO BE PROFICIENT IN PAINTING BLACK AREAS AND MECHANICAL SHADING.

Only people who live around Tokyo, please...

I GET MANY INQUIRIES ABOUT THE FAN CLUB "JACKY," BUT IT'S CURRENTLY DISCONTINUED, AND WE'RE NOT TAKING ANY MORE MEMBERS. SORRY.

"TAM'S ANYTHING GOES CAPSULE" 1-7 AND "THERE GOES TOMOE!" 1-8 ARE OUT IN JAPANESE.

AND I HAVE 2 NOVELS OUT FROM PALETTE BOOKS. "A CARRIAGE COMING AT MIDNIGHT" AND "WON'T YOU GO TO PARADISE!"

Check them out if you want! ♥ ☺

■ Please send mail to: ♥

Yumi Tamura
c/o Viz
655 Bryant St.
San Francisco, CA 94107

I LOVE READING MAIL! ♥ ☺

P.S.

BONUS

YOU'RE HELPING ME ALREADY!

THANKS FOR STAYING BY MY SIDE!

I'm so happy.



Recommendations

If you enjoyed *Basara*, please try these other graphic novels:

Chicago

From *Basara*'s creator, Yumi Tamura, *Chicago* is an action-packed short series set in the near future. Capable Rei and her seasoned partner Uozumi are survivors. After being deployed to a half-finished manmade island to search for earthquake victims, their military rescue squad is bombed. Discovering the mysterious forces behind the bombing becomes their personal goal as they join a private rescue force that gathers secretly in a Shinjuku bar called "Chicago."

Banana Fish

Currently running in the anthology *Animerica Extra*, Amiki Yoshida's most famous series is filled with gritty action. When a man is gunned down in the gang-infested back alleys of 1980's New York City, it begins a complicated series of events that causes gang leader Ash to go up against mafia don "Papa" Dino. The series sends Ash and his allies across the country and against political intrigues in search of the truth behind the mysterious and deadly substance "Banana Fish."

Vagabond

One of the best action artists out there, Takehiko Inoue puts his skills to the test in this extraordinary series. Inspired by Eiji Yoshikawa's classic samurai story *Musashi*, *Vagabond* is the tale of an unfocused soldier on the losing side of history. Takezo's initial goal of survival escalates the violence around him, turning him into a homicidal wildman. Through the way of the sword, he must transform himself from brute to saint.

Editor's comments

The Buddhist fable *Sarasa* mentioned is a common one. There are many versions, but the basic story is the same. Because a robber once demonstrated mercy by saving a spider, Buddha offered him a spider's thread to get out of Hell. Kicking others off the thread for fear it would break, the robber's selfishness demonstrated he wasn't worthy of salvation, so Buddha cut the thread. Unlike Shuri's balloon, the divine spider's thread would have held the weight of all the souls who climbed it.

What was Servo doing with his hand when he asked if *Sarasa* was Shuri's girl? Japan has many interesting hand gestures, and some convey ideas we don't have gestures for in the U.S. The one Servo used—a fist with the pinkie extended, knuckles outward—indicates a girlfriend, wife or mistress, though it once indicated a baby. Although Servo offered the gesture casually, it can be considered a bit lewd. Conversely, a fist with the thumb up and knuckles out (like a thumbs up here) is used to indicate a boyfriend, husband or boss.

With Seiran located near Tokyo's ruins, finally some signs of pre-apocalypse Japan have been revealed! I felt they were worth mentioning, since our readers may not be familiar with the landmarks of Tokyo. Many probably recognized Tokyo Tower, which stands 333 meters tall, poking out of the waves in the ceremony. At 243 meters, the massive Tokyo Metropolitan Government Office buildings in Shinjuku were more than halfway submerged as the Count rowed *Sarasa* to his secret base in the Tokyo subway system. These landmarks suggest the water has risen over 150 meters.

I've wanted to mention this overlooked cultural detail from book three. Shuri remembered planning with Shido to make Suo City a utopia "...just like Yamato in the ancient 'Kojiki.'" Yamato was Japan's first centralized government and the "Kojiki" (Record of Ancient Matters) is Japan's first book. Related by the storyteller Heida no Arai and compiled by O No Yasumaro in 712 AD, the "Kojiki" is a collection of history and legends, including the story of the creation of Japan.

